

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting - 19 October 1999

Present: Mr Worrall (Chairman),

Mr Adams, Mr Bridger, Mr Cole, Mr Cooper, Mr Dolan, Mr Dunlop, Mr Egleton, Mrs Fea, Mr Greer, Mr Henry, Prof. Hogarth, Dr Hollis, Mr Jones, Mrs Kverndal, Mr Lidgate, Mrs Mallinder, Mrs Mallowan, Mr McKenzie, Mr Nasr, Mr Penfold, Mr Reed, Mr Rigby, Mr Royston, Dr Scott, Mr Sheasby, Mrs Simmonds, Mrs E. A. Smith, Mr G. G. Smith, Mr Somers, Mrs Temple, Mr Whitehouse, Mr Winterbourn and Mrs Woolveridge.

Apologies for absence: Mrs Barton, Mr Bowater, Mrs Burry, Mr Dhillon, Mr Houdret and Dr Kennedy.

25. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on a number of events and functions he had attended since the last meeting. Of particular note were attendance at the annual visit of the Lord Mayor of London to Burnham Beeches, the Council's Fun Week for Children held at Burnham Grammar School, the Maidenhead Regatta and Thames Punting Club Championships, and a visit to Odds Park Farm to see the new permanent exhibition of millennium murals produced by local school children. The Annual Charity AM-AM Golf Tournament had recently been held at Farnham Park Golf Course for the Chairman's Charity which this year was the South Bucks Alzheimers Society. The Tournament had again been very successful and with a dinner which followed it had raised in the region of £7,500. The Chairman thanked Ross McFarlane the golf professional, Hamish Pringle and Emma Axford for their work in organising the event and Biffa Waste Services for sponsoring it.

The Chairman referred to the recent publication of a report from an independent Panel that presided at the Public Examination into the Draft Regional Planning Guidance for South East England prepared by SERPLAN. The recommendations of the Panel that gave rise to great concern were those relating to the provision of new housing in the region. The Panel had dismissed proposals submitted by SERPLAN as unreasonable and recommended a massive increase in housing provision in the South East in the period to 2016. For Buckinghamshire, it had recommended an increase of 27,700 homes, a rise of more than 34% over the existing generous provision. The Chairman estimated this could mean the equivalent of new development of the size of Aylesbury in Southern Buckinghamshire. The Panel had further recommended that provision be made for all those who wished to live in the region irrespective of any environmental or transport constraints, that Green Belt and strategic gaps should be revised to accommodate this growth, that green field sites should be identified on the fringes of larger urban areas, all of which would encourage a North-South drift of population. The Chairman urged that the Council take every opportunity, in conjunction with other Councils in the south east to persuade the Government to reject these proposals and argue for the support of Lord Rogers proposal for regeneration of the north of England. The Council gave its whole-hearted support to the Chairman to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions urging the rejection of the Panel's proposals.

26. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13 July 1999, having been circulated, were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

27. POLICY COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Policy Committee, Mr Egleton, presented the Part I report of the meeting held on 28 September 1999 and gave a résumé of the work of the Committee.

Formulating the Community Plan (minute 41) contained recommendations about the content of the Community Plan Consultation Paper which put forward for the first time the aim of the Council to be a community leader and advocate. Some specific amendments were moved to the Community Plan Consultation Paper as follows:

Under theme one - the addition of "we will value and protect the ecology of South Bucks, in particular encouraging and supporting the bio-diversity of the District";

Under theme three - the amendment of "healthy business group" to "green business group";

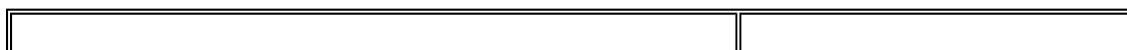
Under theme four - by addition to the bullet point on social exclusion of "by, for example, promoting greater access to public transport for disadvantaged groups in our society and by encouraging and supporting new forms of community transport";

Also under theme four - by amending the town and village centres bullet point to refer to "by working for the retention of village shops and other essential community facilities" and adding a new bullet point "promote a balanced housing policy which encourages a variety of tenures with emphasis on appropriate affordable housing".

After discussion, it was agreed that the spirit of these amendments was acceptable although the amendment to the town and village centres bullet point was settled by the addition of the words "working for the retention of village shops and other essential community facilities" to the existing wording which set out a number of housing initiatives. It was also agreed to omit the words "and supporting" from the amendment regarding community transport. An amendment was also proposed to add under theme three an additional bullet point relating to the management of tourism in a sustainable way but on being put to the vote this amendment was lost. Finally, it was agreed to delete the word "forty" from the second paragraph of the document so that it would read "the Councillors who make up your South Bucks District Council are determined ...".

On the proposed office move (minute 51) it was noted that a further meeting of the Office Move Project Sub-Committee had taken place on 11 October 1999, subsequent to the meeting of the Policy Committee. Reference was made to the views of the "campaign group" which had been set up in Beaconsfield to oppose the Council's move. Some inaccuracies were contained in their statement. Reference was also made to the issue of the Council's press release about the forthcoming consultation exercise and the inclusion of consideration of re-development of the Council Hall in Beaconsfield about which various views were expressed.

Before considering the adoption of the Policy Committee Report, a recorded vote was requested in accordance with Standing Order 19 (6).



<u>For adoption of the Report</u>		<u>Against adoption of the Report</u>
Mr Adams	Mr Nasr	None
Mr Bridger	Mr Penfold	
Mr Cole	Mr Royston	
Mr Dolan	Dr Scott	<u>Abstained</u>
Mr Dunlop	Mr Sheasby	
Mr Egleton	Mrs Simmonds	Mr Cooper
Mrs Fea	Mrs E. A. Smith	Mr Henry
Mr Greer	Mr G. G. Smith	Mr Jones
Prof. Hogarth	Mr Somers	Mrs Kverndal
Dr Hollis	Mr Whitehouse	Mrs Mallinder
Mr Lidgate	Mrs Woolveridge	Mr Reed
Mrs Mallowan	Mr Worrall	Mr Rigby
Mr McKenzie		Mrs Temple
		Mr Winterbourn

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED that, subject to the agreed amendments regarding the wording of the Community Plan Consultation Paper, the report be received and adopted.

28. COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Community and Leisure Committee, Mr McKenzie, presented the Part I report of the meeting on 7 September 1999 and gave a résumé of the work of the Committee.

The possibility of swimming concessions for residents (minute 37) had been considered and rejected by the Committee. It was felt that it would be costly to administer, with five different neighbouring authorities with which partnership arrangements would have to be agreed and the costs would outweigh the benefits. Discounts for residents at the Council's own facilities had been looked at in the past and decided against. It was noted that the Audit Commission had recently reported on local authority fees and charges and the Committee had accepted

that the findings could be taken into account when charges were generally next reviewed.

On youth recreation (minute 38) and playground equipment (minute 39) the Committee had recommended schemes of financial support whereby the Council would match expenditure from Parishes on initiatives to support provision for both youth recreation and to provide either new or upgrade existing playground equipment.

The Charity AM-AM Golf Tournament at Farnham Park Golf Course (minute 48) had been a great success and, having obtained the support of the Council, the Chairman indicated that the proceeds from the green fees paid by the players and amounting to about £700 would be added to the funds raised for the Chairman's charity.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

29. ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Environment and Housing Committee, Mrs Mallowan, presented Part I of the report of the meeting on 14 September 1999 and gave a résumé of the work of the Committee.

The Committee had previously agreed the new Sustainable Development Strategy which committed the Council to maximising the amount and variety of wildlife throughout the District. The Strategy contained specific reference to bio-diversity (minute 31) and the Committee had approved a commencement of work on identifying sites of importance for nature conservation. The Committee had received presentations on this from representatives of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Bucks Berks and Oxon Naturalists Trust and the Bucks Nature Conservation Forum.

The Committee had agreed to make comments to the Environment Agency about the Waste Incineration Plant at Colnbrook, Berkshire (minute 32). While the Council supported the concerns expressed including the submission of an objection to the application for energy from waste incineration at the plant should this increase emissions, there was some doubt as to whether the current emissions were wholly within World Health Organisation Standards. As a result, the Council agreed that further representations be made to the Environment Agency calling for a reduction in the emission levels from the plant to ensure that they were well within recommended standards.

With reference to a re-development of Courtney House (minute 35) it was reported that following the issue of a letter of intent, the contractor was now committed to commence on site on this scheme on 15 November 1999.

In minute 37, the Committee had rejected a proposal to undertake a housing needs survey in the 2000/2001 financial year. Taking into account a report of the independent Panel into the Draft Regional Planning Guidance prepared by SERPLAN, it was proposed that the Committee give further consideration to a housing needs survey since the data it would provide could help to establish a true picture of local need which could be used to defend unreasonable demands for housing from other areas.

RESOLVED that subject to (a) further representations to the Environment Agency about emission levels from the Waste Incineration Plant at Colnbrook and (b) the question of a

housing needs survey being referred back for further consideration, the report be received and adopted.

30. PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee, Mr Dolan, presented the Part I reports of the meetings held on 28 July, 25 August and 22 September 1999 and gave a résumé of the work of the Committee.

Planning application numbers (minute 50) had reached an all time high in June but had fallen slightly during the last quarter. Although the total in the year was likely to be the highest on record, income had not increased significantly since the level of planning fees had not been raised.

In minute 68, the Committee's response to SERPLAN's "Plan, Monitor and Manage" approach to housing provision was reported. This called for a substantial reduction in the level of proposed monitoring by local authorities envisaged in the approach and for the resources which would otherwise need to be diverted to carry this out to be concentrated on the reviews of the Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan and the South Bucks District Local Plan. The Chairman of the Committee followed up the earlier comments of the Chairman of the Council about the report of the independent Panel on the Draft Regional Planning Guidance with particular reference to the housing growth proposals. In addition to the objection to the proposed number of new dwellings required, there was serious concern about the Panel proposal that only 50% of all new development should be on previously developed land, which fell short of the Government's own target of 60%. The Panel's recommendations would also threaten the continued protection of large areas of the Green Belt since it was recommending that Green Belt land not covered by other national protection policies be assessed for meeting growth in areas where development pressures were strong. Other authorities in the region, including Buckinghamshire County Council, were voicing their opposition to the Panel's recommendations. The Chairman of SERPLAN's Members Policy Group had called on the Deputy Prime Minister to reject the report. The Council endorsed a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister over the signature of the Chairman of Planning and Transportation Committee condemning the Panel's harmful recommendations on housing growth and urging him to adhere to the principles set out by SERPLAN in preparing the final Regional Planning Guidance. The letter would be copied to Dominic Grieve MP requesting his support.

The Council noted proposals on development control procedures (minute 89) whereby a Panel would be meeting to consider the best way of introducing public speaking at meetings of the Committee, and that all Members of the Committee were now invited to meetings of the Plans Panel.

RESOLVED that the reports be received and adopted.

31. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

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

(1) Policy Committee (Part II) - 28 September 1999 - as set out in minute 62;

- (2) Community and Leisure Committee (Part II) - 7 September 1999 - as set out in minute 55;
- (3) Environment and Housing Committee (Part II) - 14 September 1999 - as set out in minute 51; and
- (4) Planning and Transportation Committee (Part II) - 28 July, 25 August and 22 September 1999 - as set out in minutes 55, 78 and 97.

32. POLICY COMMITTEE

The Part II report of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 28 September 1999 was presented.

In approving the recommendation on budget provision for Dropmore House Urgent Works (minute 65 (2)) it was noted that notwithstanding the scaffolding work on site now commenced by the owner, it was important for the Council to show a firm hand in this matter.

Reference was made to the report on Office Move Project Sub-Committee (minute 67) indicating that Beaconsfield Town Council had indicated in a letter positive support for the relocation of the District Council Offices from Slough to Beaconsfield and re-development of the Council Hall site, and it was pointed out that this support was subject to a number of conditions.

33. COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Part II report of the Community and Leisure Committee held on 7 September 1999 was presented.

It was confirmed that a site visit had been made to Farnham Park Golf Course to view the demonstration of the "pump-up" communications mast (minute 58) and the matter would be referred again to the next meeting of the Committee with the views of the Consultative Body.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

34. ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

The Part II report of the meeting of the Environment and Housing Committee held on 14 September 1999 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

(Note: Mrs Mallowan declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Parish Councillor in minute 53 - Results of Investigation into Contaminated Land at Hardings Row, Iver.)

35. PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Part II reports of the meetings of the Planning and Transportation Committee held on 28 July, 25 August and 22 September 1999 where presented.

With reference to minute 61 (Lesser Halings, Tilehouse Lane, Denham) and the subsequent questioning of the accuracy of the minute, it was confirmed that construction of the swimming pool at this site had not commenced and the minute had been amended accordingly.

Referring to Dropmore House (minutes 59, 80 and 101) the Chairman of the Committee reported that English Heritage had confirmed it would meet 80% of any costs incurred by the Council if it was necessary to issue an Urgent Works Notice.

RESOLVED that the reports be received and adopted.

36. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 6.50 pm.