

SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting - 10 July 2007

- Present:** Councillors Dhillon (Chairman), Mrs Royston (Vice-Chairman),
Councillors Adams, Miss Arnold, Binns, Bradford, Brown, Bullock, Busby, Chapman, Clark, Mrs Cranmer, Mrs Evans, Grover, Harding, Hollis, Mrs Holloway, D.F.A. Jones, S. W. Jones, Mrs Khan, Lidgate, Mrs Lowen-Cooper, Dr Merrick, Reed, Mrs Simmonds, Ms Vigor-Hedderly, Mrs Wallis, Weir, Wilson and Mrs Woolveridge.
- Apologies:** Councillors Chhokar, Hardy, Miss Hazell, Oxley, Sandy, Thomson, Tilbey, Walters and Ms Webber.

13. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on recent functions and events attended on behalf of the Council, and highlighted a reception at HQ Air Command at RAF High Wycombe, a reception at the Defence School of Languages in Beaconsfield, a Jubilee Service of Thanksgiving at the Gerrards Cross Community Centre and the Buckinghamshire Scouts Annual General Meeting. There had also been an enjoyable evening reception for recently retired Councillors. The Vice-Chairman also reported on functions she had attended.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 May 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman, subject to two corrections to minute 9 [Appointments to Committees/Groups]. The amendments were to the effect that Councillor Grover not Councillor Oxley had been appointed to Resources PAG and Councillor D Jones not Councillor Grover had been appointed to Planning PAG.

15. CABINET

The Leader, Mr Busby, presented the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 June 2007. Each minute of the Cabinet was introduced by a relevant Portfolio Holder respectively.

With reference to minute 5 [Resources Portfolio Holder Report] the Leader explained amendments to the Contracts Procedure Rules and the virement rules within the Financial Procedure Rules, each of which had been recommended for adoption. He also explained the recommendation for funding from reserves additional rate relief of £4,662 in respect of Bekonscot Limited together with the reasons why discretionary relief for two Sports Clubs had not been approved.

With reference to minute 8 [Environment Portfolio Holder Report] and recommendations regarding the adoption of the Taplow Conservation Area Character Appraisal, the document was commended to Members as a very good and informative read.

With reference to minute 9 [Performance Management Update] the Chief Executive gave a presentation to the Council outlining the approach to Performance Management within the organisation. This identified the key drivers to improve performance and development, beginning with a clear vision based on community aspirations. Staff were motivated to achieve stretching goals which created a culture of innovation and improvement. He outlined the priority performance indicators for the Council illustrating the performance against some of the indicators. The presentation concluded with an analysis of a number of customer satisfaction best value performance indicators (BVPIs), which related to Cabinet minute 10 [BVPI General Satisfaction Survey Results]. A number of questions and points were raised regarding the information presented to which answers were provided.

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With reference to minute 11 [Buckinghamshire Pathfinder Project - Governance Arrangements], the Leader reported that the project was still at a very early stage and formal meetings of either the Joint Improvement Board or the Leaders Group had yet to be held. An important issue to be resolved at an early date was how to communicate progress with Councillors.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

16. PLANNING COMMITTEE

(1) Part I of the report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 23 May 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

(2) The report to the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20 June 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

17. LICENSING COMMITTEE

The report of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 6 June 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

18. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 June 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

19. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5 June 2007 was presented.

Minute 5 [Adoption of the new Code of Conduct for Members] contained recommendations to the Council to adopt the new Code. During consideration of the item, Lynne Reardon, the Monitoring Officer, introduced and explained the new Code of Conduct and distributed guidance material from the Standards Board for England. The presentation covered the general obligations of the new Code. There were changes to the precise definitions of personal interests and prejudicial interests, including exemptions to the rule on when a personal interest must be declared. The guidance also covered what a Member can do/not do when they had a prejudicial interest and the changes as regards disclosure of gifts and hospitality. Members noted that they would all be required to make a fresh notification of their personal interests within 28 days of adoption of the new Code.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

20. PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The report of the meeting of the Personnel Committee held on 2 July 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

21. FUTURE OF THE POST OFFICE NETWORK - CONSULTATION

The Council considered a report of the Director of Resources about a Government announcement on 17 May 2007 proposing the closure of 2,500 compensated Post Offices, to reduce the network to around 11,800 Post Offices by Spring 2009.

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The Government had set out a broad strategy for the Post Office network but would be pressing ahead with a consultation on a programme of closures, to be carried out on a rolling basis across the UK.

The Council had responded to a previous consultation of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) making a number of specific points but centring on the view that Post Offices were vital to the fabric of many towns and villages; that a transparent and independent assessment should be made of which must be retained; and that the role of Post Offices in serving the poorer more vulnerable and elderly members of our community should be preserved.

The report proposed that the Council should begin to consider any issues it wished to raise with Post Office Limited during the pre-consultation stage of the individual area reviews. It would also be necessary for the Council to have arrangements in place to respond to any consultations within the timescale allowed.

After consideration it was

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) responses to the detailed consultation be agreed in consultation with the Community Leisure and Communications Portfolio Holder.

22. 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 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.

Cabinet Meeting (Part II) - 26 June 2007 - as set out in minute 14; and
Planning Committee (Part II) 23 May 2007 - as set out in minute 11.

23. CABINET MEETING

The Leader, Mr Busby, presented the Part II report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26 June 2007.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

24. PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Part II report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 23 May 2007 was presented.

RESOLVED that the report be received and adopted.

25. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.24 p.m.