

## SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting - 18 September 2007

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

### 26. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported on recent functions and events attended on behalf of the Council, and highlighted attendance at the Royal Garden Party on 17 July, the retirement presentation of Peter Squires from the Health and Housing Unit, opening of the Café in Burnham Beeches by the Lord Mayor of London and the Charity AM-AM Golf Tournament on 14 September. The tournament had been most successful and he thanked Members for their support and the staff involved in organising the event.

Mrs Royston reported two attendances as Vice-Chairman - at the Thames Valley Adventure Playground Silver Jubilee on 15 September and the Slough Social Fund on 17 September. She mentioned in particular the availability of grants, loans and donations from the Slough Social Fund for individuals, clubs, and associations, for the encouragement of educational, sporting and arts activities.

### 27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 July 2007 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### 28. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Council received a presentation from Jenny Brooksmith, Corporate Information Management Officer for the Council. The presentation was to assist Members to consider information issues, raise awareness of legislation, to outline the Council's and Members individual responsibilities and offer the opportunity for further training.

The principal piece of legislation was the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which placed a number of responsibilities on the Council as to how it managed the information it holds, what was published and how requests for information are handled. The Data Protection Act 1998 was introduced to ensure that personal information held on individuals is used fairly and responsibly.

Members were provided with a pack containing:-

- Information Management Booklet - guidance on Data Protection, Freedom of Information and other information issues
- Information Commissioner's Guide to Openness
- Information Commissioner's Personal Information Toolkit
- Information Commissioner's Guidance to Elected Members
- Information Commissioner's guide to check personal information

- DEFRA leaflets about environmental information regulations

29. **VERDANT GROUP PLC**

The Council received a presentation from Mr Jonathan Miles, Chairman of the Verdant Group, which had been awarded the Council's waste collection contract from 1 November 2007. Mr Miles was accompanied by Chris Halfpenny and Brian Ashby, Business Manager for the South Bucks contract.

Mr Miles began by saying he was pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Members of the Council in advance of the contract beginning. With 31 working days to the commencement of the new contract planning for a smooth transition was continuing. The key changes for the new contract were the move to a boundary sack collection (rather than from the back door) and the recycling boundary box collection on a fortnightly basis.

The street cleaning element of the contract was output based and would comprise hand sweeping, mechanical sweeping, a grab vehicle for clearing fly-tipping and a rapid response graffiti team. More resources were being devoted to this part of the contract which would make it more visible as well as more effective.

Verdant were working jointly with the Council on information for all householders about the changes that would be brought by the new contract. It was inevitable that there would be some resistance or possibly confusion but the focus was on anticipating queries and managing them effectively.

Members asked questions about various aspects of the contract and received assurances on the following:-

- An informative letter to all households delivered by Royal Mail during week commencing 24 September
- A smooth changeover of staff with the majority transferring under TUPE regulations.
- Graffiti removal team available to work with Parishes
- Plastic sacks (equivalent to two per household per week) to be delivered at six monthly intervals
- Arrangements for assisted collections.

Councillor Lidgate, Environment Portfolio Holder, thanked the Verdant Group for attending to brief the Council and looked forward to a successful start to the new contract, following the hard work put into the procurement and selection process.

30. **CABINET**

The Leader, Mr Busby, presented the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 September 2007. Each minute of the Cabinet was introduced by the relevant Portfolio Holder respectively.

With reference to minute 21 [Budget Monitoring 2007/08] the Leader reported that more recent figures shown to Cabinet Members indicated that key income targets were continuing to be met.

With reference to minute 24 [Planning Policy Portfolio Holder Report] the Deputy Leader introduced this report which related to Decision Notices issued. It was noted that the response to the stakeholder consultation about the accommodation requirements of gypsies and travellers in Buckinghamshire had been in robust terms and stressed that no credit had been given for Districts that already provided sites compared with those that provide none or very little and that before further sites are provided in South Bucks, other authorities

should be expected to "catch up". Following a question on the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder Report relating to the South East Plan housing allocations, it was noted this had been a hot topic of discussion at the LGA Conference. The South East Leader's Group had commissioned consultants to examine the number of windfall sites coming forward in order to make a strong case for these to be included in the South East Plan housing targets.

With reference to minute 27 [Data Quality Strategy] The Audit Commission had indicated that the Council had been accepted at level 3 in data quality and the data quality strategy and action plan had played an important part in that achievement.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and adopted.

31. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

- (1) Part I of the report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18 July 2007 was presented.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and adopted.

- (2) The report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 15 August 2007 was presented.

With reference to minute 37(A) thanks were expressed on behalf of Stoke Poges residents for the careful attention to suitable conditions attached to the permission for application No. 07/01113/FUL - Sports Development at Magnolia Farm.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and adopted.

32. **MEMBERS' REPORTS**

- (1) The Council received a report of the Leader on attendance at the Local Government Association Conference in Birmingham on 3 to 6 July 2007.

The Leader commented on the struggle within the LGA for the views of District Councils to be heard alongside the powerful voice of County and Unitary authorities. Nevertheless, a strong South East Leaders Group had emerged. It was also noted that the former Leader, Peter Hardy, remained a member of the LGA Improvement Board.

- (2) The Council received a report of the Deputy Leader on the Joint Improvement Board meeting held on 26 July 2007. The Deputy Leader added that the Pathfinder was still at a very early stage and there was little more report. In conjunction with other District representatives, he was keen to stress the importance of "getting it right" rather than getting it done quickly. A Pathfinder Seminar for all Members was due to be arranged in late October.

- (3) Councillor Jane Wallis, Sustainability Champion for the Councillor addressed Members on a Workshop for Members (Engaging your Council with Climate Change).

Sustainability was creeping up the agenda, mainly as a result of climate change, and the Council had a responsibility to examine how its actions impinged on sustainability issues. A number of initiatives had already been undertaken including:-

- Half day Officer training in sustainability
- A Sustainable Quality of Life and Carbon Reduction group
- An energy action plan

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- Introduction of sustainability impact appraisals for key strategies and policies
- Sustainability appraisals of local development framework documents actions to reduce water consumption at Council offices.

The workshop proposed would take place on Wednesday 3 October 2007 commencing at 5.30 p.m. It would be run by the Energy Savings Trust and it would aim to:-

- Inform and engage Members with climate change and the need to implement energy efficiencies
- Equip Members with information and examples to take forward to the climate change and energy efficiency agenda within the organisation. All Members were urged to attend the workshop.

- (4) The Council received a compilation of reports from the Council's representatives on Outside Bodies presented to recent Policy Advisory Group (PAG) meetings.

Arising on a report, a question was asked about the Buckinghamshire Historic Towns Project, supported by the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Forum and English Heritage grant. The project will survey thirty "Historic Towns" of which it was noted just four were in South Bucks. The question arose as to communications regarding the project, where more information could be sought and whether there was scope for increasing the number of South Bucks towns within the survey.

### 33. 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 1 of schedule 12A to the Act.

Planning Committee (Part II) 18 July 2007 - as set out in minute 33.

### 34. PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Part II report of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 18 July 2007 was presented.

**RESOLVED** that the report be received and adopted.

### 35. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.40 p.m..