

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2000, IN THE IRELAND ROOM, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.30 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 1.15 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr W J Y Chapple (Chairman);

Mrs C Aston, Mrs C M Aston, Mrs M A Baldwin, Mr I S Bates, Mr J W Cartwright, Mrs M P Clayton, Mr D A B Green, Mrs B Jennings, Mrs E M Lay, Mr R Lingham-Wood, Mr M B Oram, Mr J H McB Page, Mr K I Ross, Mr F Robinson, Mr D J Rowlands, Mr J S Ryman, Dr B R Stenner, Mrs C S Willetts and Mr H G W Wilson.

Petitions

The Chairman accepted two petitions presented by Mr Robinson; one on behalf of the Green Lane Action Committee who collected 196 signatures from local residents in respect of their concerns regarding the speed and volume of traffic along the stretch of road. The other, presented on behalf of Little Kingshill Society, contains 755 signatures from local residence concerning the speed and flow of traffic on a number of roads where fatal accidents have occurred.

Following the Chairman's acceptance of the petitions it was noted that the petitions would be passed on to Chiltern Local Committee.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr B Oram declared an interest in Item 22 Little Marlow Gravel Pits Study.

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 15 June 2000 were confirmed.

2 DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received and noted the reports, from the meetings of the Development Control Sub-Committee held on 17 July 2000 and 4 September 2000. The Committee discussed further its concerns regarding the erection of temporary classrooms in already over subscribed schools.

3 COUNTRYSIDE SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received and noted the report, including the confidential report, of the meeting of the Countryside Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2000. The Committee was invited to attend the official opening of the Thornborough Community Woodland on Wednesday 22 November 2000 at 11 am.

4 HIGHWAYS AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee received and noted the report of the Highways and Public Transport Committee held on Thursday, 21 September 2000. It was noted that maintenance works on the A418 between Bierton and Wing will begin shortly. The Chairman reported that more money looked likely to come from Government which would allow for the works to be started earlier.

5 B482 CADMORE END – TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

The Sub-Committee noted the notice of motion received from Mr A J Plumridge and referred by the County Council at its meeting on 20 July 2000 following the receipt of a petition in support of a campaign to reduce the speed limit through Cadmore End Village.

RESOLVED

That the Environmental Services Committee advise the Council that no further action should be taken on Mr Plumridge's notice of motion.

6 REVIEW OF ACCIDENT RATES ON DE-RESTRICTED A AND B ROADS

The Committee's attention was drawn to the report of a review of accident rates on the de-restricted A and B roads and in particular the A418 between Bierton and Wing in Rowsham. The local member spoke of the issues facing pedestrians in Rowsham regarding the speed and volume of traffic.

7 POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE PANEL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received and noted the report of the meeting of the Policy, Performance and Finance Panel held on 18 September 2000.

8 SERVICE PLANS

It was noted that development of Service Plans for 2001/2002 would be considered in conjunction with the budget and that targets will be set for the next three years.

RESOLVED

That member working groups be formed to develop the six Service Plan areas.

9 LOCAL PERFORMANCE PLAN – 4 MONTH MONITORING

The Committee noted that the appendix to this report is available on the Intranet giving information and highlighting the indicators to be used as headline indicators for Environmental Services and the Best Value performance indicators as dictated by the Government and must be reported on.

RESOLVED

That the suggested list of targets as set out in the appendix to the report be endorsed.

10 GYPSY PANEL

The Panel received and noted the report of the meeting of the Gypsy Panel held on 17 July 2000.

Site Management Practices

The Committee noted the current problems and developments in managing the Authority's gypsy sites.

RESOLVED

- 1 i That the Chairman of Gypsy Panel approach Central Government to seek the extension of the Rent Officer's remit, in the particular case of gypsy sites operated by a local authority, to accept that a fair rent determination should take into account the need to recover the reasonable costs of the Authority in providing, maintaining and managing its sites and that the support of the Buckinghamshire MPs be sought for this approach;**
- ii That the rent level charged for pitches on the Authority's gypsy sites be adjusted to a level based on the fair rent assessment made by the Rent Officer Service and introduce an additional charge for the supply of water to that pitch;**
- iii That present management practices aimed at developing more involvement on the part of the gypsies themselves be implemented following the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 September 1999.**

Unauthorised Camping

The Committee noted the current working practices in relation to fund actions taken in respect of unauthorised encampments.

RESOLVED

- 1 i That the County Council continue to use its powers under Section 77 to 79 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 in respect of private land, within any legal limitations placed upon it, in any case requested, provided that it can be assured that its reasonable costs will be recovered.**
- ii That in connection with minute 5, Recommendation 16 of the Policy and Resources Committee of 30 September 1999 attempts to harmonise County Council policy and actions in this respect with those of the Thames Valley Policy Authority continue.**

Gypsy Service Business Plan

The Committee received the report seeking Members' views on the Gypsy Service Business Plan.

RESOLVED

That the Environmental Services Committee be advised that the Gypsy Panel has received and considered the Gypsy Services Business Plan for 2000/2001 which incorporates appropriate performance standards for the service.

Haddenham Gypsy Site – Lease For Future Development

The Committee noted the report advising on the next stage in the process of leasing the site for a development by a private gypsy family.

RESOLVED

- 1 That an ad hoc group be established consisting of six members, three County Councillors, one District Councillor, the Parish Councillor and the Local Member, to consider approaches for the lease of the site at Baghill Lane.**
- 2 That Mr J H McB Page be appointed Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.**
- 3 That alternative approaches to site management, including contracting out once the development of the Haddenham site has begun, be considered.**

Teleworking And Other Developments In Working Practices

The outline and current working practices of the Gypsy Team and the proposed future developments were noted by the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the arrangements for the development of teleworking within the Gypsy Services take effect from 1 October 2000.

11 STRATEGIC PLANS PANEL

The Committee received reports of the Strategic Plans Panel held on 18 September 2000. Members noted that the Recommendation in regard to the Milton Keynes Local Plan Review: Deposit Plan will be considered in conjunction with Agenda Item 16 Milton Keynes Local Plan Review: Deposit Draft Plan.

Milton Keynes Local Plan Review: Deposit Draft Plan

The Committee's attention was drawn to the report which considered overall housing and employment growth, Milton Keynes expansion areas, gypsy and traveller sites and the transportation issues.

RESOLVED

That a meeting be held between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Plans Panel and the local member with representatives from Aylesbury Vale District Council to discuss concerns over the potential impact of the proposed western expansion area;

Buckinghamshire Economic Assessment 1999-2000

The Committee's attention was drawn to the report which outlined the main findings of the Buckinghamshire Economic Assessment 1999 to 2000 and its implications to the Structure Plan Review.

RESOLVED

- 1 That there is a need for a further study into the concepts of 'spaceless' growth and 'jobless' growth.**
- 2 That the assessment (and any further studies which may in due course be commissioned) be used in supporting the preparation of future development options in new Bucks and the drafting of new Structure Plan policies.**

12 THE HOUSING GREEN PAPER

The Committee noted the implications of the Government's Housing Green Paper.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the comments set out below be endorsed as the response of the County Council to the Housing Green Paper:-

Response 1: A Housing Strategy for the 21st Century

The implementation of this aim is consistent with the County Council's policies as set out in the County Structure Plan. It can therefore be supported.

Response 2: Making it work locally

The paper lacks any specific reference to County Councils, or the role they may have in looking at issues across District boundaries. All references are to "local authorities", and often other text implies that these are District Councils. Certainly, County Councils have a major role to play in creating sustainable communities and co-ordinating the provision of new private sector housing. This should be acknowledged.

Response 3: In Buckinghamshire new joint working arrangements on Local and Structure Planning provide a structure for the County and Districts to work closely on housing issues. Achieving sustainable housing development requires joint commitment to undertake rigorous urban capacity studies and set clear affordable housing planning policies at both Structure and Local Planning levels.

Response 4: Encouraging sustainable homeownership

Measures to tackle affordability problems in areas of significant house prices are welcomed. However, it is not clear how effective this type of subsidy will be in the longer term, as there is a danger that the 'market' will readjust to take account of increased spending power. It also does not fully address problems faced by popular areas with a slow turnover of properties and limited or static growth in new accommodation eg settlements closely bounded by planning constraints. Nevertheless, the Starter home initiative does seem to have potential.

Response 5: Reforming Social housing for the 21st Century

There has been a long running debate between local authorities and the Government over the role that the planning system can play in delivering affordable (ie subsidised) housing. It must be acknowledged that, given no control over tenure, the planning system is ill equipped to play a major role in affordable housing provision. Also, as the affordable housing is in effect a planning 'gain' from private development, local authorities can only secure

such housing where private development takes place. This is not necessarily where long term need will be located. South Bucks District Council was also unsuccessful in trying to extend the requirement to small site developments, even though these are the main source of private development in that District.

Response 6: Discussions with the Government Office for the South East have highlighted the need for the dissemination of best practice regarding negotiations over affordable housing (which existing planning policy requires all authorities to undertake). There is also a need to place the onus on private developers (rather than the local authorities) to prove why “market and site conditions” limit the provision of affordable housing on their site. This would bring much needed clarity to the negotiations.

Response 7: There is also a need to carefully control Registered Social Landlords to ensure that they are delivering truly affordable housing to meet identified local needs. There have been examples in the County of Housing Associations that provide housing only to a very specific sector of the social housing sector, which may not represent local needs.

Response 8: Providing new affordable housing
This review can be welcomed, although the County Council would wish to have the opportunity to comment on the format of any new social housing indicator.

13 COUNTY COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON THE LUTON AIRPORT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report which sought confirmation of additional County Council representatives on the Luton Airport Consultative Committee (LACC). LACC recently agreed to increase the County Council’s representation from one member to three. It was noted that Mrs Jennings already serves on the Committee and the two vacancies will be filled by Mr W J Y Chapple and Mrs M P Clayton.

RESOLVED

That Mrs B H Jennings, Mrs M P Clayton and Mr W J Y Chapple be the County Council’s three representatives on the Luton Airport Consultative Committee

14 ENFORCEMENT OF THE CHILDRENS AND YOUNG PERSONS (PROTECTION FROM TOBACCO) ACT 1991

The Committee received a report on the proposed enforcement programme for 2001/2002 which is an annual requirement of the Act. Members noted the proposals for this year are very similar to 2000/2001 and include:

- Responding to complaints

- During routine inspections, advising traders about legislation and issuing the Division Traders Information leaflet
- Test purchases, and considering prosecution for those traders who sell
- Monitoring vending machines only upon receipt of a complaint
- Liaising with other agencies as appropriate.

RESOLVED

That the enforcement activities as set out in the report be undertaken in 2001/2002

15 FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received and noted a report concerning food law enforcement and the requirement for the Authority to produce a Food Law Service Plan for the year 2001/2002. The report identified the level of food sampling the Food Standards Agency is likely to expect in 2001/2002. It was noted that indications coming from the Agency is that if authorities fall below the lower quartile it may be considered as failing. The only comparative data for Buckinghamshire is for 1998/99, placing it below the lower quartile, an additional allocation of £11,826, above the £21,000 2000/2001 spending to meet the acceptable minimum requirements expected by the agency.

RESOLVED

That the authority aims to increase food sampling expenditure to a level closer to the mean spending level for County Councils subject to budget constraints.

16 REPORT OF TRADING STANDARDS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Committee received and noted the report on items considered by the Trading Standards Special Interest Group. Members noted that the Buckinghamshire Proof of Age Card will be launched in Wycombe District in March 2001. The report was welcomed with particular congratulations going to JoTS. It was noted that fund raising will continue for the David McCruden Memorial Fund with a number of events already planned, in particular, Morris Dancing by members of DMT.

17 APPOINTMENT OF PUBLIC ANALYSTS AND AGRICULTURAL ANALYSTS FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Committee received the report on the appointment of personnel of Eurofins Scientific Ltd as Public Analysts and Agricultural Analysts to the County Council.

RESOLVED

That Mr John Salter, Mr Duncan Arthur, Mr Alan Parker and Mr Jeremy Wooton of Eurofins Scientific Ltd, 445 New Cross Road, London, be appointed as Public Analysts for Buckinghamshire County Council by virtue of Section 27(1) of the Food Safety Act 1990 and be appointed Agricultural Analysts for Buckinghamshire County Council by virtue of Section 67(3) of the Agricultural Act 1970.

18 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received the report seeking formal approval to adopt the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management Plan. The Plan aims to provide a strategic framework for the management of the County's archaeological heritage. Members noted that the Plan was part of a joint working exercise with members of the Countywide Archaeological Advisory Committee (CAAC).

Members welcomed the plan agreeing it was very interesting and valuable document.

RESOLVED

That the Buckinghamshire Archaeological Management be adopted.

19 MILTON KEYNES LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: DEPOSIT DRAFT PLAN

The Committee received the report detailing key issues of concern in the Milton Keynes Local Plan which is intended to update the Local Plan and extend it to cover the period up to 2011.

The Plan proposes to build large numbers of housing close to the Aylesbury Vale boundary at the Western expansion area and involves new housing developments in the Plan at a density below current government guidance. Part of the response to Milton Keynes will be to intensify the current proposed density, which in some areas is as low as 20 dwellings per hectare.

Members discussed concerns regarding the supply of jobs beyond the capacity of the local labour force and the two proposed gypsy sites planned for the western expansion area adjoining the County boundary.

RESOLVED

The Committee

- a Thank Milton Keynes Council for consulting this authority on the Deposit Draft Milton Keynes Local Plan;**

- b Welcome the fact that the Deposit Plan has been prepared in the context of the Adopted Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan;**
- c Support the objective of the Deposit Plan that aims to ensure there is sufficient land for housing to meet the County Structure requirement;**
- d Request that a more comprehensive study of urban capacity be undertaken to inform the housing policies of the Deposit Draft Plan;**
- e Object to Policy H8 (Housing Density), which should incorporate a higher minimum density figure in line with current advice in PPG3;**
- f That Policy H1 (Land Allocated for Housing), which should be amended by reducing the greenfield allocations to take account of higher densities referred to in (e), and any additional potential from the existing urban areas that may be identified in the urban capacity study requested in (d) be objected to.**
- g Issue a holding objection to the proposed over provision of jobs in relation to local labour supply, pending more information on the likely impacts on Buckinghamshire.**
- h Object to the policy EA5 (Western Expansion Area), which fails to address the visual impact of the development when viewed from the countryside to the west (particularly by proposing housing development to the south/west of the natural ridge line running across the site); or the significant transportation impacts that such a scale of development would have on adjoining areas; and incorporates housing density assumptions below those set out in current Government advice;**
- i Support the principle of making provision for Travellers (Gypsies), but request that the need for new sites be reconsidered against capacity on existing sites, with any identified new provision (whether an expansion of existing sites or a new site) be located as to obtain a more even distribution than proposed in policy H12; and**
- j Support Policy T12 (Major Transport Schemes) in relation to the East/West Rail link.**

20 THE LANDSCAPE PLAN FOR BUCKINGHAMSHIRE: PART 1 – LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The Committee received and noted the report which presented to Members the final draft Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire Part 1. Members approval was sought for the draft Landscape Plan to be adopted in principle as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan. The results of a public consultation on the draft and the proposals to proceed with the preparation of Part 2 of the Plan were noted.

RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- i Approved the draft Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire Part 1, delegating the publication of the final document to the Head of Spatial Planning in consultation with the Chairman/Portfolio Holder;**
- ii Noted the separate report on Consultation Responses and approved the actions taken/recommended;**
- iii Adopt the Landscape Plan for Buckinghamshire Part 1 as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Buckinghamshire County Structure Plan, with the final publication of the document delegated as in recommendation (i) above;**
- iv Approved that Part 1 be made available as detailed in paragraph 29 of the report; and**
- v Endorsed the proposal to proceed with the preparation of the Landscape Plan Part 2 – Landscape Conservation and Management, as detailed in paragraph 30 of the report.**

21 LANDFILL TAX CREDIT SCHEME: OPPORTUNITIES IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Committee received and noted the report on the opportunities and successes which have arisen from the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme for Buckinghamshire. As a whole Buckinghamshire has benefited from Landfill Tax Grants to the tune of over £4,000,000 to date. This includes over £800,000 for County Council sponsored projects. Schemes submitted to Onyx (the principle operator in the South) for consideration are channeled through the nationally based Onyx Environmental Trust. As south Buckinghamshire falls into the London and South East Region, projects to be considered come from a much larger area than that of EB Bucks in the north of the county. It was noted new initiatives being developed include the collection and recycling of paper waste from companies for use in children's education and Nurseries.

The Committee discussed the report recognising that more schemes need to be identified to enable to County Council to achieve the maximum funding available.

RESOLVED

That the contents of the report be endorsed.

22 COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY BILL – RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Committee received and noted a report advising on the implications of this new legislation, and its impact on related staff and legal costs. The bill sets out the statutory responsibility of County Councils in becoming access authorities, placing on them new responsibilities. The Government recently announced amendments to the bill for the greater protection of AONBs and the requirement for County Councils to set up and run local countryside forums. It was noted that the scale of change required by the bill will impact greatly on staffing in the Rights of Way Team. The Chairman of Environmental Services Committee advised that these issues will be addressed in the Service and Budget Planning that is currently in operation.

RESOLVED

That the Committee considered the implications of this new legislation in preparing the budgets for 2001/02.

23 CODE OF GUIDANCE FOR SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST: ENCOURAGING POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS: CONSULTATION PAPER

The Committee received a report outlining the main elements of a new DETR Consultation Paper on the Code of Guidance for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) The Countryside and Rights of Way Bill currently going through the House of Lords aims to substantially increase the protection of sites of SSSI increasing the powers of English Nature and encourage positive management of SSSIs and discourage activities that would harm them.

RESOLVED

- 1 That the Committee support the increased powers given to English Nature to protect SSSIs.**
- 2 That the County Council's continued commitment to the appropriate management and protection of SSSIs within Buckinghamshire.**

24 CONTROL OF NOISE FROM CIVIL AIRCRAFT: CONSULTATION PAPER

The Committee received a report advising of a new consultation paper on the control of aircraft noise. Following complex consultation, new powers to introduce a noise amelioration scheme which currently works at Heathrow and Gatwick Airports will allow Luton Airport and other aerodromes to enforce schemes relating to aircraft noise control. The County Council, who have representatives on the Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG), will on 13 October be agreeing a detailed response to the consultation papers, questions and responses as set out in Appendix B of the report.

RESOLVED

That the Environmental Services Committee endorse the proposed response of the LGA's Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group (SASIG) as set out at Appendix B of the report.

25 LITTLE MARLOW GRAVEL PITS STUDY

The Committee received a report advising of the aim to produce an agreed development brief for the area, Little Marlow Gravel Pits, and the intention that it be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by both Wycombe District Council and the County Council.

RESOLVED

That a study of the Little Marlow Gravel Pits area be endorsed.

26 WYCOMBE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN TO 2011 – RESPONSES MADE UNDER THE DELEGATED POWERS PROCEDURE

The Committee received and noted a report regarding the current status of representations made on the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 and the results of the recent actions taken under delegated powers procedure. It was noted that the outstanding issues related to parking and the provision of gypsy sites.

27 WASTE ISSUES

The Committee received and noted a report advising members of the outcomes of the last full meeting of the Bucks Waste Forum and the work of the Officers' Group, describing the main areas of potential collaboration with the District Councils.

Over the next 20 years it is predicted that waste will increase by 80% doubling the cost from £14,000,000 to £28,000,000. The Government's New Waste Strategy requires authorities to minimise waste by 2020 and to reduce biodegradable municipal waste landfilled to 35% of that produced in 1995. Under the current working practices, Buckinghamshire will be unable to meet the current recycling targets set down by the Government without introducing new initiatives to achieve a more sustainable management of waste. Areas for thought coming from the working group included:

- a scheme whereby the collection of green waste will be available at a charge to users.
- a 'Real Nappy Campaign', aimed at new mothers and supported by each of the five districts will promote the use of real nappies, emphasising that disposable nappies make up 2-3% of domestic waste.

The report was discussed and noted.

**MR W J Y CHAPPLE
CHAIRMAN**

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