



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Report

Date: 7th March 2011
Title: LAF Members' Report
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Buckinghamshire County Council – Finance and Budgets (Richard Pushman)

1. The County Council met on Thursday 17 February 2011 to discuss the budget for 2011/12 - 2013/14 and to outline the budget for the next three years. Over the last four years, the Council saved £57m and Council decided it now needs to save a further £56.3m over the next three years. In response to the need to make savings, as well as the recent public consultations, the following were agreed by County Council:
 - A freeze on Council tax;
 - £31.6m more for capital investment on roads, school buildings and property;
 - More time will be given to make changes to libraries and youth services;
 - School crossing patrols will remain;
 - Grant funding for the voluntary sector is to be maintained;
 - £250k provided for Big Society projects; and
 - Funding for Connexions service is to be maintained.

Next year, the Council will need to save £8.45m through internal programmes.

Recommendation: Members to discuss the implications.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) 3 consultation (John Elfes)

2. The LAF response to this consultation is enclosed in Appendix 1.

Recommendation: Members to note.

The 2012 Olympics (Peter Challis)

3. Peter Challis, member representing SUSTRANS, is project managing the walking and cycling improvements around the Eton Rowing Lake, involving a number of cross-boundary connections into Buckinghamshire from the Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead and Berkshire. Southern Construction & Surfacing has now been appointed to undertake these works, starting soon.
4. Dan Eastmond from Firestation Arts will be creating an arts trail and DEFRA is managing an active travel project to cover Eton-Dorney and other Olympic venues in London and Weymouth.

Recommendation: Members to note.

Chilterns' Conservation Board Access Conference, 3rd March 2011 (Neil Harris)

5. This year's conference was held at College Lake Nature Reserve, Tring. Neil Harris outlined the National Trust's Outdoors Vision for the Chilterns, which he will present today. Tom Franklin, Chairman of The Ramblers, spoke on the economic case for investing in access to the countryside; Mike Furness on future access to the Forestry Commission Estate land; and Fiona Broadbent on Simply Walk and The Big Society. In the afternoon, an access tour was taken around College Lake.

Recommendation: Members to note.

Natural England Countryside Code Review (John Elfes)

6. It is 6 years since the Code was re-written and Natural England is undertaking a limited stakeholder consultation, with a deadline of 31st March 2011. Natural England is particularly interested in the scale of the revisions and on ideas to promote the code locally. Their suggestion is to replace the existing five headline messages into three - one for each word of the strap-line: Respect, Protect and Enjoy. Please see Appendix 2 & 3.

Recommendation: Members to put forward comments and ideas.

British Horse Society correspondence (Viv Lynch)

7. Mark Weston of the British Horse Society has written to all Local Access Forums regarding the value of equestrian access in the countryside (Appendix 4). The Buckinghamshire LAF member for the BHS has been copied into correspondence from Richard Cuthbert in Hertfordshire, suggesting that in negotiating new definitive rights of way, their default position is to request a restricted byway and compromise on a bridleway.

Recommendation: Members to discuss the issue and a reply to the BHS.

Traffic Regulation Orders on bridleways (Chris Hurworth)

8. At the last meeting the Member representing off-road users asked if, in the event an order for a new byway being confirmed, the County would make a pre-emptive Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to ban vehicular use. If so, why was this being

done and was the policy led by officers or members? The decision to make a Traffic Regulation Order rests with the Council's Rights of Way Committee. The County Council's 'Policy for the Management of Motor Vehicles in the Countryside' states: 'The Council will consider the use of a TRO only on the basis of sound and sustained evidence and not as a means to solve what might be one-off or short-term problems. The use of a pre-emptive TRO may be useful, but will only be considered where exceptional circumstances dictate a significant potential for problems of public safety or damage to fragile environmental conditions or biodiversity.'

http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/row/restricted_byways.page?

Recommendation: Members to put forward their recommendations.

Open Access – Chorley Manor Farm, near West Wycombe (GR: 810, 962).

9. Natural England is consulting on the restrictions at Chorley Manor Farm, as they expire on 19th May 2011. There is a fenced-off route along the northern boundary providing access all year and the owner proposes to shoot on 27 occasions during September, October, November, December and January. There is a restriction to keep dogs on the fenced-off route all year due to 'disturbance to game, and public safety during game shooting and for livestock'. In addition, there is a restriction for walkers to keep to the fenced route from 1st July until 1st February annually, from 23/8/2006 – 1/2/2011, in order to reduce disturbance to game. The LAF's views on the current directions are sought to assist in deciding whether the restrictions are still necessary for the original purpose and, if so, whether the extent and nature of the restrictions are still appropriate for the original purpose.

Recommendation: Members to put forward their recommendations.

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Access Forum

10. In the interests of fostering closer ties with neighbouring Local Access Forums, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead LAF have appointed Harry Hancock to serve as an observer to the Buckinghamshire LAF. Similarly, they have invited an observer to the next RBWM LAF. Their next meeting is in June 2011, though the precise date is still to be confirmed.

Recommendation: Members to suggest an observer, as necessary.