

9g. CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Solar Photovoltaic Systems

The County Council is installing 21 roof-mounted solar PV systems across Council buildings and schools, under the REFIT Energy Performance Contract. The systems will save £30k per annum in electricity costs, and will generate £68k per annum in revenue income from the Feed-in Tariff. The programme has been prioritised to deliver the PV installations by 31 December to ensure the County Council receives the current rate of Feed-in Tariff before the planned reduction in January 2016.

Additional revenue income will be generated from the sale of electricity to sites outside of the corporate property portfolio. A programme of investment in energy efficiency retrofit measures in New County Offices and 12 other sites will be delivered this financial year under the Energy Performance Contract. Our delivery partner for this contract is Cofely, who provides an energy savings guarantee for the programme of measures delivered.

Country Parks – The Blair Witch Project Experience

The Blair Witch Project Experience event in Black Park was a great success. The event brought in almost £1400 in profit to the country parks, but more importantly it really raised the profile of Black Park and advertised the park to a whole new market. Since the event was not the usual for the country park, we had to ensure we reached a different demographic i.e. young professionals and high education students. We used social media advertising mostly, plus local media and advertising round the parks. The event sold out with more than two weeks to go and the 'buzz' around it really amplified its popularity.

On the night, it was very clear to see that the attendees were newcomers to the park and our events, with lots saying how beautiful the park is and that they'd never been before, but would definitely be back. The best thing about the event was the excellent feedback we have received.

Country Parks – Summer Events

Our summer events programme for 2015 was jam packed with exciting events that entertained our customers, young and old, and gave them great, fun experiences and lasting memories. We had everything from family fun days with inflatables and clowns to an open-air theatre performance by the five-star reviewed Lord Chamberlain's Men showing Shakespeare's Twelfth Night.

Attendance figures were better than ever this year and the events saw thousands of new and existing visitors in the parks, showing them off to more people than ever and providing them with exciting, yet affordable days out. Unfortunately, the weather was not on our side much this year and torrential rain meant calling off one of our big family fun days and a lower than usual attendance at two of our open-air events. This meant we haven't made as much profit as we could have, but that is the nature of the business and we still see the summer programme as a success since it's done such a great job of showing off the parks to so many visitors.

Flood Management

Partnership Delivers Flood Prevention Success at Aston Clinton

In winter 2013/14 Aston Clinton Park flooded due to a blocked culvert. Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC), as the landowners, had the culvert surveyed and found it had collapsed. BCC has worked together with the

Environment Agency (EA) to create a new stretch of open watercourse which would bypass the collapsed culvert. This has been a very effective partnership project with the EA, tenant farmer, parish council and, more recently, Aylesbury Vale District Council working together to bring an imaginative solution to a flooding problem. Most of the project has been completed apart from some fencing and is set to benefit the environment, reduce flood risk and it was more cost efficient than replacing the culvert.

Photos and videos of the completed project will demonstrate the effectiveness of the project as it evolves over time.

During flooding



After new channel constructed



Planning and Enforcement

Social Media Identifies Offender in Fly-Tipping Conviction Number 500

It was fitting in this modern era that conviction number 500 achieved since 2003 was identified by an entry placed on a popular social media website (Facebook). On 24 March, a large amount of household waste found dumped in Newton Longville. An observant member of the public who saw the dumped waste recognised it from a post she had seen recently on Facebook and informed the authorities. When interviewed at a police station by BCC investigators, Jack Glassett of Milton Keynes

denied dumping the waste himself. However, the Magistrates ordered him to pay a total of £1,185.70.

Fly-tipping has reduced by 50% in Buckinghamshire since the campaign was launched, saving over £3m in collection and disposal costs during that period. Buckinghamshire is leading the way on enforcement nationally, convicting ten times more offenders than are being convicted on average across England

Conviction of Offenders at Green Barn Farm, Marlow, for Running Unauthorised Waste Site

A couple who allowed a waste company to store 170 skips full of rubbish without permission at Green Barn Farm, Marlow, have been given nine months to remove it by Wycombe Magistrates Court. Maria and Philip Dunstall, of Bath Road, Taplow, were served an enforcement notice by Buckinghamshire County Council, in July 2014, requiring removal of the waste, and cessation of the use of the land for storing of waste. The notice was not complied with and subsequently the Dunstalls were each given an 18 month conditional discharge. They were also ordered to pay total costs of £5,230 to the County Council, along with a Victim Surcharge of £15 each.

Public Rights of Way

Public Footpath Diversion Order at Great and Little Kimble Confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate

This is a success for the Rights of Way team as BCC considered the Order met the required legal tests and the new alignment for the footpath will provide the public with a better and safer walking route. The Order was confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate.

Claimed Public Bridleway Order at Westbury Confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate

An application was submitted in 2010 by the Parish Council to record the route as a Public Bridleway on the Definitive Map following long-term use by the public. As a result of an objection, a Public Inquiry was held with the Inspector subsequently confirming the Order. This is another success for the Rights of Way team as BCC supported the application and the route will now provide lawful equestrian access and has recognised the historic use of the route by the public.

Bucks Local Access Forum to Encourage Lost Ways Working Group

The Local Access Forum has contacted all Parish Councils and key user groups to encourage the formation of a working group to research potential lost public rights of way (routes which have existed historically but are not recorded on the Definitive Map). This is in aid of ensuring as many routes are recorded before the 2026 cut-off date which is being enacted by the Deregulation Act 2015.

Environment

Environment Assurances Secured at HS2 Select Committee

The HS2 Select Committee hearings took place in early October forming a milestone for a project which is making very high demands of Planning and Environment (P&E). The Council has clear requirements for mitigation, and the P&E service has been working closely with HS2 and external bodies to achieve appropriate assurances and outcomes. Each of the different teams in P&E has had significant success in different ways.

- Archaeology: Following extensive discussions with HS2 and other local authorities there were a number of changes to key documents covering the

investigation and management of archaeological features and there was no need to appear at the committee. Issues addressed included oversight of archaeological surveys and excavations along the route and the additional resources required to cover the demands on BCC archaeologists and the HER.

- Rights of Way: Through positive engagement in the months leading up to the HS2 Select Committee, HS2 agreed to our requirements for the mitigation of adverse effects on the public rights of way network, including new routes originally considered 'improvement' rather than mitigation, and agreement to meeting the county width standards for new footpaths and bridleways. This was the culmination of extensive negotiations over the last three years and avoided the need to appear at the Select Committee, freeing time for other technical officers to argue their case
- Ecology: It was not possible to reach agreement on outstanding issues before the committee meeting and Dr Ian Thornhill (Senior Ecologist) appeared before the committee to present the Council's position. Outstanding issues include habitat connectivity and the provision of Green Bridges (with wildlife and access value) as well as biodiversity off-setting. The presentation was well-received and provided a strong case, discussions will continue seeking a positive outcome
- Flood Management: The team negotiated assurances on monitoring, establishment of a baseline and a process for mitigation designs in the River Misbourne Valley with the HS2 team and therefore were not required to present at the Select Committee.

Heritage at Risk

Historic England has published the latest national Heritage at Risk register with no new sites identified in Buckinghamshire. Currently there are 21 sites in the county, 11 of them at "High" risk. Barrows (ancient burial mounds) have been identified as being particularly at risk. Historic England and BCC will be promoting a new network of volunteers engaged in helping to protect these.

Replacement Minerals and Waste Local Plan progress

Since our public consultation on the RMWLP in spring 2015, we have been:

With respect to Site Allocations

- Assessing the suitability of sites nominated through our 'Call for Sites'.
- We have also brought these potential sites to the attention of the District Councils.
- Further assessment of the proposed sites proposed will be through a Sustainability Appraisal by consultants (AECOM).
- We asked for more detail on the draft SA Scoping Report and fed back various information.
- When we have the results of Sustainability Appraisal then we will assess the sites proposed against existing policies in the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy to arrive at Preferred Areas for allocation in the new minerals and waste local plan.
- Members were informed about all potential sites at a briefing exercise held on 17 September 2015 at the Gateway, and this highlighted issues that need more attention.

Review and assessment of policies

- This includes the review of “saved” policies from the 2006 Local Plan, and the drafting of more up to date local plan policy, so as to be consistent with recent national policy on minerals and waste.
- We are in the process of reviewing our evidence base for these policies and proposed site allocations.
- Evidence Base documents are being discussed with internal teams.
 - Evidence Base includes Local Aggregates Assessments, which the Council is required to produce every year. The LAAs will inform us as to how much sand and gravel we need to provide within the new plan.
 - Monitoring reports of policy usage, and of existing waste capacity. Waste Capacity information helps know how much extra capacity to plan for.
- The Evidence Base documents include a refresh of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- Also duty to co-operate engagement with other Council’s concerning flows of minerals and waste
- Policies are presently being worked up by assessing realistic options, looking at representations received, and gathering background evidence to inform policy development.

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