

# Minutes

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSIONING COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY 6 OCTOBER 2009, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY  
HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.03 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.08  
PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr B Allen, Mr M Appleyard (Non Voting Member), Mr P Cartwright (VC), Mrs A Davies, Mr M Edmonds, Mr T Egleton (C), Mr P Hardy, Mr N Hussain, Mrs B Jennings, Mrs W Mallen and Ms R Vigor-Hedderly

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr J Bajina and Mr P Monk

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Mrs V Letheren

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Ms S Barnes, Mr M Chard, Ms K MacDonald, Mrs C Street and Ms H Wailing

## **1. APOLOGIES/CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Davey and Mr M Moore.

The newly appointed parent governor co-opted representatives were welcomed to the meeting. They were:

- Mr J Bajina, Secondary School Representative
- Mr J Bilson, Primary School Representative (not in attendance)
- Mr P Monk, Special School Representative

Mr Monk had been nominated as a primary school representative but had kindly stepped into the post of special school representative as there had not been any nominations for the special school post.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Bajina declared the following interests:

- As Parent Governor at Sir William Ramsay School and at Westfield School
- As Vice-Chairman of the County Community Consultative Group
- As an investor in properties in Wendover Street, Green Street and Claremont Court, High Wycombe
- As a member of the Muslim Parents' Association

Mr Monk declared the following interests:

- As a Parent Governor of Iver Village Infant School and of Iver Village Junior School.
- As the parent of a statemented child.
- As his son received home to school transport provided by the Authority.
- Parent Governor at two schools.
- As his wife was a member of the South Bucks Autistic Society.

Mr P Hardy, Member for the Bulstrode Electoral Division, declared an interest in item 5 as some residents in Hedgerley had expressed concern at the cut to service 459.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2009 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

## **4. PUBLIC PLATFORM**

There were no public questions.

## **5. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION**

The Chairman said that Mrs R Vigor-Hedderly (Iver Electoral Division) wished to present an issue to Members as a possible Councillor Call for Action under Section 21A, paragraph (c) of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Chairman told Members that Mrs Vigor-Hedderly would have four minutes to present her issue, and that the Cabinet Member for Transportation, who was also in attendance, would then have an equal amount of time to respond.

Mrs Vigor-Hedderly told Members the following:

- The Council had made cuts of £400 000 to rural bus services across the County.
- This had affected residents in the Iver and Richings Park area, and many residents had protested strongly against the cuts to Bus Service 459 (Uxbridge - Richings Park - Langley).
- Residents had found out about the service being cut through a bus driver who had said that his contract was being terminated at the end of October 2009.
- Mrs Vigor-Hedderly had been contacted by residents and had liaised with the Parish Council and VOSA. Mrs Vigor-Hedderly had also spoken to Jim Stevens, Head of Transport for Buckinghamshire, the Cabinet Member for Transportation and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
- A bus company had to be given a set notice period. However the Parish Council should have been consulted in February 2009, before the bus company was given notice.
- The cut to Service 459 had caused a huge amount of public feeling. Two

proposals had been put forward by officers at BCC to try and resolve the issue but neither of these had been viable.

Mrs Vigor-Hedderly said that she did not believe that BCC had adopted the correct policy in regard to consultation with residents.

The Chairman then invited the Cabinet Member for Transportation to respond. The Cabinet Member said the following:

- The proposed cuts to rural bus services had been taken to Overview and Scrutiny in January 2009.
- The election in June 2009 and the six week purdah period prior to the election had delayed the consultation process.
- Each bus company had a different notice period in their contract, and this had to be adhered to.
- A letter had been sent to the Parish Council to tell them about the proposed cuts. The word 'consultation' had deliberately not been used as the level of consultation possible when cuts were necessary would be limited. However the letter had invited comments from the Parish Council.
- A matrix had been used to consider cost, the number of people using each bus service and how each service contributed to the priorities in the Local Transport Plan.
- A comment received back had been that Iver residents would prefer to shop in Uxbridge than in Slough, so alterations had been made to ensure a bus service to Uxbridge.

The Member for the Bulstrode Electoral Division declared an interest as some residents in Hedgerley had also expressed concern at the cut to service 459. The Member asked how much money would be saved from the cut to bus service 459. The Cabinet Member said that there would be a saving of approximately £35 000.

A Member asked for the total savings which would be made from cuts to bus services. The Cabinet Member said that there would be an overall saving of £400 000, and that this had been identified in the previous year's Medium Term Planning process.

A Member commented that as the route of bus service 459 crossed the County boundary, Slough Borough Council should be paying a subsidy to the Council. The Member also said that historically the Iver area had always had a bus link to Uxbridge, and that the community there had evolved around this. This needed to be taken into consideration.

Mrs Vigor-Hedderly said that her main concern was the way in which the Council consulted residents, and asked for a copy of the Consultation Policy. Michael Chard, Policy Officer, said that he would distribute a copy of the Consultation Policy to all Members of the Committee. **ACTION: MC**

Members then discussed how this issue should be taken forward. It was noted that the Cabinet Member had arranged a meeting with Mrs Vigor-Hedderly for that afternoon (although this had only been arranged the previous day), and that the outcome of the meeting should be awaited before the Committee took any action. It was agreed that Mrs Vigor-Hedderly would report back on the issue at the meeting on 20 October 2009. The new bus service which would replace service 459 was due to start on 2 November 2009.

However Members also felt that there was a separate, more general issue of how the Council carried out its consultations, which would need to be addressed. It was agreed

that the Cabinet Member for Transportation should attend the meeting on 10 November 2009 and supply a written report outlining the policy which was used for carrying out consultations, and how this linked to the Locality Strategy.

## **6. CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS/FORWARD PLAN**

### **Future Direction of Country Parks and Green Spaces**

Mr B Allen referred Members to a report which went to Cabinet on 28 September 2009 (attached). The report was regarding the future direction of country parks and green spaces, and recommended that a Programme Board be nominated to investigate how country parks should be managed and financed. Cabinet had agreed the three recommendations in the Report.

Mr Allen told Members that he was a Member of the Country Parks and Green Spaces Liaison Group but that the Group had not been told about the proposals. There had been a lack of consultation, with only one elected Member on the Programme Board.

The Member for the Iver Electoral Division said that Iver Parish Council had previously contacted Legal Services to say that they were happy to take on responsibility for Thorney Park. The Member suggested that other Parish Councils could do the same if they had Quality Status.

A Member said that country parks were a countywide asset and that decisions regarding this should not be taken by an internal Programme Board, but by elected Members.

Members said that the lack of consultation on this decision was similar to the lack of consultation discussed in Agenda Item 5. Members should be involved at the beginning of a process, when different options were still being discussed, rather than after a decision had been taken.

Members also discussed how far the Committee should look at individual detailed issues, or whether they should look at more general issues. A Member said that the task and finish group structure should be used for more detailed work, and that the main committee should address wider issues.

Members agreed that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment be asked to attend the meeting on 10 November and to provide a written report on the decision about the Future Direction of Country Parks.

It was also agreed that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment be requested to delay implementation of the decision until he had attended the Committee. The possibility of a task and finish group on this issue would be added to the Committee's work programme.

### **Forward Plan**

A Member noted that Members of the Committee had been nominated to take responsibility for different areas on the Forward plan. The Chairman said that a list of these Members would be circulated.

It was also suggested that the Leader take the Committee through the Forward Plan on a regular basis. It was agreed that the Leader would be invited to the Committee to do this in April 2010.

## **7. CALL-INS**

There were no call-ins.

## 8. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman updated Members on the following:

### **Statutory, Mandatory & Discretionary Review Update**

Phase 1 of the review into mandatory/discretionary spend at Buckinghamshire County Council was well underway. This part of the review had involved the formation of four Working Groups who were currently meeting with Heads of Service to attempt to identify statutory and discretionary spend, and establish what their minimum levels of service delivery were, together with the associated costs. The meetings were going well and the Chairman said that he would like to thank all members of the Working Groups and the Heads of Service for their attendance - particularly as these dates were arranged at such short notice.

The Chairman said that he had called an extra meeting of the full Commissioning Committee to take place on Tuesday 20th October at 10.00am in Mezzanine Room 1. This would be a discussion-based meeting to take stock of progress with the review so far, and to decide how to move ahead with Phase 2. The second part of the review was likely to involve more detailed work focusing on two specific services. This work would be undertaken between November 2009 and March 2010.

Members were asked to let Claire Street know if they were able to attend on 20 October.

### **SSG Feedback**

On 22 September the Chairman and Mr M Appleyard presented information on overview and scrutiny to managers from across Buckinghamshire County Council. This event included a session where senior managers had an opportunity to feedback their thoughts on overview and scrutiny. The feedback included:

- Officers did not know enough about what was going on, so how would the public? Therefore it had to be asked whether scrutiny was an effective mechanism.
- Be creative about tapping into challenge functions within the governance arrangements of partner organisations – to use this collective talent and expertise as part of the scrutiny function.

### **Officers champion the value and potential of scrutiny**

- Not particularly! 'Done to' rather than able to take part in the process.

### **Scrutiny activity has brought about changes**

- There have been positive changes, for e.g. through the anti-bullying work, young carers, scrutiny of school standards which has led to targeted action
- Highway maintenance – reviews have led to evolving change and gave the Service a new direction.
- Felt 'dragged' along to meetings!

### **Scrutiny reflects the voice of the public**

- It should reflect the voice of the public but doesn't feel like it does
- How can we involve the LAFs and parishes?

Mr M Edmonds sent his apologies for the meeting on 20 October.

The Chairman referred to an e-mail from BALC, which is attached. The e-mail was in regard to how BALC could help to advertise the public-platform item on the Committee agenda.

## **9. WORK PROGRAMME DISCUSSION**

This item was taken out of order due to timing at the meeting.

Members were asked for their comments and suggestions for the Committee Work Programme.

The Chairman told Members that the Review into statutory and discretionary spend would last until March 2010.

Scrutiny of the Budget had also been proposed for January 2010.

Members also put forward the following topics for scrutiny:

- Consultation process (see Agenda Item 5).
- Home to School Transport (Contract with Amey and whether savings had been realised). This could perhaps be looked at after the Review into statutory and discretionary spend. Also consider the issue of how personal data of children was handled and possible child protection issues, such as forms containing children's data not requiring signature by parents. There had been issues regarding sub-contracting by taxi firms, and also regarding how Amey dealt with complaints. One of the Key Performance Indicators for Amey was to log complaints.
- Process of 11+ (not the policy but how the process works). Information would be needed from the Cabinet Member for Achievement, Learning and Skills before looking at this.
- The Built Environment Project
- Early Years Single Funding Formula Consultation – the Committee should have briefing on this.
- Climate Change (NI 185) and Sustainability – The Council Policy should be considered and included as part of every Review undertaken, through a standard matrix.
- CAA/Performance - the latest figures would be available in December 2009, and these could be looked at a special meeting. Partners could also be invited.
- Inequalities in Buckinghamshire/Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (some overlap with the Public Health OSC). This issue to be referred back to the Public Health OSC first.
- Village Design Statements re: housing.
- Locality Working – The Police were reviewing the boundaries for Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs), so the Review should wait until this was completed.
- Country Parks and Green Spaces (see Item 6)
- Performance Measurement – should be a standing item every few months.

A Member said that the Work Programme needed to include large issues and also more specific service issues.

It was agreed that Michael Chard, Policy Officer, would put together a timetable of work for the meeting on 20 October. This timetable would also include outstanding items from the previous Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

## **10. PATHFINDER SHARED SUPPORT SERVICES**

This item was taken out of order due to timing at the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Susan Barnes, Interim Strategic Director for Shared Services.

Susan Barnes referred Members to the Project Update Report in the papers and said

the following:

- One of the original Pathfinder projects had been set to achieve savings through joint working.
- Rationalisation of services could bring a reduction in Council tax or an increase in budget for frontline services.
- A business case was put forward in 2007 with six different options for shared services. These were then reduced to four options.
- In September 2008 Aylesbury Vale District Council, Wycombe District Council, South Bucks District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority agreed to a joint venture company with a private sector firm.
- A Joint Committee had been set up which was empowered to take decisions at different points in the process, with the exception of the final contract decision.
- Some Partners had the option to review the bids during the process.
- The contract was put to tender in June 2009, and four companies were short-listed. These were BT, Capita, IBM and Mouchel. Work had started the previous week with the four short-listed companies, and a Bidders' Conference had been held on 2 October 2009.
- The market had changed since 2008. Companies were now much more cautious in terms of submitting bids, as each bid could cost a company £1m-£2m. Many companies were now more interested in consultancy.

Susan Barnes also told Members that only certain information could be shared with the Committee as they were in public session.

Members then asked questions, and the questions and answers are summarised below.

**Will the amount of money saved be altered by the changes to the market?**

The extent to which we could lead a deal with a high number of bidders is limited.

**Are any joint venture companies in the UK already running?**

There are two running. There is a concern that multi-party companies are risky compared to one-authority companies. However the direction of travel is for public services to work together.

**You said that some partners have an option to review the bids?**

Aylesbury Vale District Council and Wycombe District Council both set requirements to look at the outline business cases before proceeding. This would not put the County Council at risk.

**If a number of partners withdraw, the County Council will become a bigger partner, and it will effectively be a form of outsourcing.**

The withdrawal of smaller partners would not be detrimental to the County Council, but we would want to avoid this due to the Pathfinder ethos. The primary driver for the Project is to make financial savings, and there has to be flexibility.

**How much of the original business case is still robust enough to be valid?**

The business case is not predicated on growth. It does make some assumptions regarding the margins that providers will look for, and these may have changed. There are also some issues regarding the interest rate of internal borrowing, but this is not a hugely sensitive issue.

**At what point would you decide not to go ahead with the Project?**

That would be a decision for elected Members.

**Were there more than four bidders in the long list?**

A number of other companies made submissions. There were also a number of 'no-show' companies, who had expressed interest but did not submit a bid due to the market.

**When do you think that Overview and Scrutiny should be involved in the Project?**

The Committee could request progress reports in December 2009 and in Spring 2010.

The Chairman thanked Susan Barnes for attending the meeting.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 20 October 2009, 10am, Mezzanine Room 1, County Hall, Aylesbury

Tuesday 10 November 2009, 10am, Mezzanine 3, County Hall, Aylesbury.

**CHAIRMAN**





## Report to Cabinet

**Title: Future direction of Country Parks and Green Spaces**

**Date: 28 September 2009**

**Author: Cabinet Member for Planning Environment**

**Contact Officer: Head of Planning Environment and Development  
Graham Winwright - 01296 383110**

**Electoral Divisions Affected: All**

**Portfolio Areas Affected: Planning and Environment, Resources, possibly Adults and Families and Achievement and Skills.**

**Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Overview & Scrutiny  
Commissioning Committee**

### **Summary**

The County Council owns and manages, through the Countryside and Heritage Group (C+H), large areas of land on many separate sites that are either;

1. Designated Country Parks
2. Green Spaces

The Country Parks & Green Spaces Estate fulfils three crucial roles:

- Informal outdoor public recreation. On small and large sites with a geographic spread across the county, (albeit all Country Parks apart from Stockgrove are within the south of the county).
- Protection of bio-diversity, some of European importance.
- Protection of archaeology and some built heritage.

**Despite the clear social benefits of the County Council supporting these areas they do represent a liability that is precariously funded and lacking in necessary investment.**

Financial constraints on the County Council into the foreseeable future mean it is highly unlikely that additional funding will be found to either support the increasing running cost of the Country Parks and Green Spaces or provide much needed re-investment to meet increasing public expectations and demographic changes.

The Project aims to set out options for the County Council to retain the social benefits of the Country Parks and Green Spaces and other services for Buckinghamshire while divesting itself of the liabilities. A change of management model would enable re-investment in these facilities and services but is unlikely to be achieved without transitional cost to the County Council.

A Programme Board representing a range of stakeholders has been established to investigate alternative means of managing the Country Parks and Green Spaces and will report to Cabinet at appropriate times.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. To agree for the nominated Programme Board to investigate how the Country Parks and Green Spaces should be managed and financed.**
- 2. To provide advice to the Programme Board and devolve the signing off of the Project Initiation Document (PID) to the Board.**
- 3. That the Programme Board will bring a further report to Cabinet recommending a new model for the future management of the Country Parks and Green Spaces.**

#### **A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision**

1. It is felt that the County Council is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future to have sufficient resources to increase funding to the Parks and Green Spaces. Income that supports the parks could decline; e.g. filming income. This will lead to an inability to fund inflationary pressures. Re-investment is needed to meet the needs & rising expectations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century user and in order to match pressures from demographic changes both from within the county & outside.
  - What is needed therefore is a management model capable of credibly meeting current funding needs *and* future investment requirements. This could be based on the 20 year costs of managing the service (a mechanism used by a number of trusts).
2. The Agricultural Estate is also managed within Countryside & Heritage and generates net income in excess of £0.2m p.a and, similarly to the Country Parks, there has been a lack of investment over a number of years. This supports the financing of the Country Parks and Green Spaces and Countryside & Heritage as

a whole however with a policy to declare surplus income from this source will decline. A review of the Agricultural Estate more than a decade ago led to the current policy which is to review the opportunities to dispose of the agricultural estate in order to generate capital receipts. The service is compensated for the loss of net income arising from disposals.

3. In 2007 LSH and Marketing Planning Associates (MPA) completed a study of Buckinghamshire Country Parks. The report recommended that the organisation of the management of the Country Parks should be reviewed with the aims of; creating greater freedoms for longer term financial planning and enabling a 15 - 20 year master plan for the Country Parks. The report also outlined the importance of property assets, their close interrelationship and corresponding link with supporting the financing of Country Parks.
4. It is important to note that there are also a number of agricultural tenancies that either directly support the financing of Country Parks for example operating the Langley Estate as an historic entity ie farms, woodlands and country park or where although land is part of the Agricultural Estate it is primarily managed for public access such as Missenden Abbey Parklands, Thornborough Community Woodland or Brill the Walks.
5. There are a number of potential management models, which will be considered:
  - In house (status quo) but with greater freedoms.
  - Transfer to a public sector organisation and/or shared management model.
  - Transfer to a not for profit Trust (local or national).
  - Transfer to a not for profit trust specially created for the purpose.

Appendix 1 sets out the results of an initial consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of different models.

6. There are a number of trusts already in operation and these have either been set up by a local authority (LA) or a through a new town initiative (NT) findings are as follows: -
  - Torbay Countryside and Coast Trust (LA)
  - Fife Countryside and Coast Trust (LA)
  - Marston Vale Community Forest Trust (LA/Gov' initiative)
  - Nene Park Trust (NT)
  - MK Parks Trust (NT)
7. All have been successful, to some degree, and have been in existence from 5 to 20 years and are either responsible for the management of large single sites or a number of large and small sites within a defined area. However, it would seem from researching these organisations that the most successful and financially secure trusts are those where the trust was gifted with a substantial commuted

sum and/or property portfolio capable of both delivering income and realising capital if component parts were sold, allowing a substantial financial reserve to be created. Of those listed above the Torbay Countryside and Coast Trust is perhaps the weakest due in the main to the lack of a property portfolio and their ability to create a financial reserve.

8. It is expected that the recommended management option will include one or more of the following elements:
  - A fixed sum up front to cover future costs in perpetuity.
  - The transfer of assets capable of delivering income.
  - Transfer of assets and fixed revenue.
  - A fixed sum up front to cover future costs in perpetuity and the transfer of assets

### **Expenditure on liabilities over the next 20 years**

9. Whilst only preliminary work has been carried out investigating assets and liabilities, at this stage, initial studies indicate that there are a number of assets that are being under-funded creating the necessity for the potential of large sums of money to be found over the next twenty years.
10. If the, “not for profit trust model” was chosen the financial model proposed would be to provide a sum (or sum plus freehold assets capable of delivering income) which endows sufficient finance to enable a trust to invest the said monies and use the interest to fund the on-going costs of the trust in perpetuity. The benefit to the County Council is that it will only be providing, at present day costs, what it would need to spend anyway over a 20 year period, with the added advantage that the trust would be able to access additional sources of funding that are inaccessible to BCC.
11. The Project will further research the finance required to maintain the various properties (liabilities and their costs) for example further time will be spent refining costs, deciding whether savings can be made by transferring to a trust but offsetting this with the likely and expected growth in the business prompted by additional development, particularly in the North of the County.
12. At this stage Cabinet members are requested to comment on the scope of work, agree for the nominated Programme Board to investigate how the Country Parks and Green Spaces should be funded and managed in the future and to devolve to the Programme Board the signing off of the Project Initiation Document (PID) on which this report is based.
13. For Cabinet to instruct the Programme Board to bring back to a future Cabinet meeting a further report, outlining a single management model for the Country Parks and Green Spaces.

## **B Other options available, and their pros and cons**

14. The recommendation is to authorise the exploration of options.

However, alternatives would be:

- To continue to operate as at present but without evaluating future options. As described above there are affordability issues with this option.
- Also as stated above there are a number of potential management models. It will be the responsibility of the Programme Board to select a model or models which they think are suitable and make a recommendation to Cabinet.

## **C Resource implications**

15. The costs associated with recommendations 1, 2, and 3 on page 2 are limited to the costs of servicing the Board and of any specialist advice that is required. Costs will be met by seconding officer time contained within services and from budgets contained within Planning Environment and Development, a figure of £40k for 2009 has been earmarked (likely to be for specialist legal and or financial advice). This will be reviewed by the Board and costs refined during the course of the Project.

16. The current estimated Revenue budgets for 2009/10, including those managed by Property Services and including management overheads are summarised in the table below.

	Gross Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net Budget £000
Country Parks and Green Spaces	872	427	445
Agricultural Estates	231	500	- 269
Total			176

17. Any transfer of the assets and liabilities to a third party is highly likely to be at some transitional cost to the Council. Cost will arise from 1) delivering the project; staff time and specialist legal advice etc. 2) The transaction to move the sites out of BCC. 3) Possible post-transaction unavoidable costs. The actual financial amount will be dependant on the model or models that the Board choose and subsequently recommend to Cabinet.

**D Legal implications**

18. This is very much part of the work that the Board will be undertaking but at this early stage it is envisaged that there will be legal implications but this is dependant on the final model or models recommended to Cabinet. This may involve the transfer of land and the transfer of staff. However, it is felt that as the Project progresses specialist legal advice will be required. If the new Trust option is selected any such Trust would be registered as a company limited by guarantee.

**E Property implications**

19. This project centres on the likely transfer of property assets (liabilities). At this stage the extent is unknown but this will be a major component of the Board's work. The possible property implications have already been brought to the attention of the relevant officers. The market value of the sites will be assessed but are expected to be zero or less than zero.

**F Other implications/issues**

20. It should be noted that if the Country Parks and Green Spaces were transferred to a not for profit trust model that effectively the Council will be transferring these assets and liabilities in perpetuity.

**G. Feedback from consultation and Local Member views**

21. At this stage staff have been informed with a series of meetings and regular updates and the Cabinet Member has forwarded a general update to all elected members of the Council.

**H. Communication issues**

22. A Communications Plan is in preparation and will need to be both outward and inward facing, as mentioned above elected members and staff affected are an important component as will be the District and Parish Councils as well as visitors to the sites in question.

**I. Progress Monitoring**

23. It will be the responsibility of the Programme Board to ensure that the Project is properly tracked and brought back to Cabinet in timely fashion.

**J. Review**

24. None
-

## **Background Papers**

Agricultural Estates Policy, LSH review, Project Initiation Document (PID) – An investigation into alternative means of managing country parks and green spaces.

---

### ***Your questions and views***

*If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.*

*If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 25 September 2009. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383604 or 383610), Fax (to 01296 382538), or e-mail to [cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk)*

## Appendix 1

BENEFITS	POTENTIAL DISADVANTAGES
<b>Option 1 : In house</b>	
Retention of long-term expertise and management control	The lack of security of self-financing and its long term vulnerability
Protection of conservation and enhancement ethos	The inability to carry over surplus funds from year to year
Retention of strategic approach	Risk of future adverse changes in Council policy/politics and financial mechanisms
<b>Option 2 : Partnership</b>	
Retention of ownership and ultimate control	Possible conflict of ideas on future development scenarios and potential for the interpretative/educational aspects to suffer
The strength – financially, human resource and marketing wise of private-public partnership	Risk of concentration on the revenue generating aspects
Guaranteed income and a minimisation of risk	Loss of/perceived loss of security for staff
	Few organisations in the private sector are capable of taking the risk at this time
	Retention of client side officer/s required to manage contract
<b>Option 3 : Transfer to another organisation</b>	
Ability to transfer the responsibilities to another organisation	Very few, if any, organisations either in the private or public sector willing to consider or indeed take the risk at this time
	Total loss of control
	If an organisation could be found potential large sum of money required
	Very real loss of security for staff
<b>Option 4: Trust</b>	
Advantageous treatment with regard to a number of aspects of taxation	Perceived loss of some management control
80% relief for non-domestic rates	
VAT exemption for some services	Funding would have to be sought 'competitively' by the trust



Access to funds, particularly capital ie borrowing	Annual report and accounts have to be submitted by the trust to Companies House and the Charity Commission
Ability to carry over financial resources beyond the year-end for re-investment purposes	Dependant on what services were transferred core revenue funding may be required from the local authority ie buying back services
Release from restrictive and expensive procedures	New accommodation may have to be found for the trust
Charitable status and opportunity to establish subsidiary trading companies	The process is generally irreversible unless the trust fails
Access to funds which are not available to local authorities, trusts are often able to raise funds from the public e.g. legacies, and to independent charitable Trusts who favour giving to charities and not to local authorities.	
The opportunity for community involvement in decision making and action (Can formally represent and help to meet the needs of the community) whilst giving the assurance that they are being monitored and advised by the Charities Commission	
Removal from the pressures of reductions in local authority budgets	
If a locally created trust was chosen as the receiver body, kudos from being involved and assisting in its creation	

