

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 25 MARCH 2014

PRESENT: Councillor A K Bacon - Chairman
 " J S Ryman - Vice Chairman

Councillors: P M Jones
 S A Patel
 J J Rush
 J F Warder
 A P Williams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors M J Cunnane, A J Garth, P N Shepherd and H A Trevette

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mrs I A Darby

40 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Community & Environment Overview Committee held on 22 January 2014, copies of which had been previously circulated, were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

42 ATTENDANCE OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THAMES WATER

Huw Thomas and Trevor Bennett from Thames Water gave an overview of the last 3 months following the wettest winter on record. They reported that 35,000 customers had been affected in some way by this weather. In Mid-February, Councillor David Martin (Bucks County Council) had called Thames Water because of flooding in Chalfont St Peter. Immediate action was required and agreement was reached between Thames Water, Bucks Highways and the Environment Agency (EA) that because of the urgency that foul water could be pumped in to the river. Normally, the pumping of foul water into a water course would not be acceptable to the Environment Agency but these were considered exceptional circumstances. Although the pump had been left in place and in fact had been put into use again that day, it was not to be a permanent solution.

Contractors had been engaged to begin the following week to investigate how surface water is ingressing the sewers and report any damage. The survey would cover an area from Amersham to Chalfont St Peter. An action plan would then be drawn up for repairs during the summer months. This would be small repairs within budget rather than major capital projects which would take longer to obtain funding.

Councillors asked what previous work had been undertaken on the sewer system since flooding had occurred in previous years. It was reported that a survey had been done but the cost of work was prohibitive at the time and only measures to prevent immediate surcharging of sewers in to properties was completed. Members asked if this report could be sent to the Council for its consideration. Because of the recent frequency of flooding in Chalfont St Peter it was acknowledged that the sewer was taking large amounts of surface water and following sudden intense rainfall flooding may recur. Assurance was sought that the pump would be available for Chalfont St Peter whenever needed but it was advised that the pump would go wherever the current priority was and anyway, the EA would not always give authority for its use.

Clarification was sought on the reasons for the flooding. It was advised that surface water was ingressing the sewer but that it was caused by more than one factor including defective pipework, unauthorised linkage to sewers, damage by tree roots, submerged manhole covers. There was also a concern that blocked sewers had not been effectively cleared when reported.

With regard to the A413 blockage, Officers advised that Environmental Health had contacted call centres repeatedly but no action was taken. Thames Water were asked to ensure when sewage outfalls occur that cannot be immediately cleared that they take measures to minimise contamination including working with TfB to close crossings, sandbag discharges and display "bio hazard" to alert the public.

A previous report by Thames Water in 2001/3 had been referred to, but not seen by Chiltern District Council. A request was made for a copy of this report.

With regard to a capital work programme, it was explained that Thames Water had not included Chalfont St Peter in its current Capital work plan. Any proposals would have to be agreed by OfWat. . Any capital scheme would not be expected to begin until 2020 at the earliest.

The Thames Water representatives agreed to return in 6 months' time to report back on the current survey and the work programme created from it.

RESOLVED

That the report by Thames Water be noted.

43 28 DAY NOTICE FORWARD PLAN & WORK PROGRAMME

There were no items remaining outstanding on the Work Programme of the Committee. Members reviewed the Forward Plan, to identify potential topics for review. The Committee agreed that there were no further items that they wished to include on the Work Programme at this time.

RESOLVED

1. That the Work Programme of the Committee be noted.
2. That no further items from the Forward Plan be added to the Work Programme of the Community and Environment Overview Committee at this time.

The Chairmen requested that item 12 on the agenda be considered next and the committee agreed.

44 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2014-17 AND POSSIBLE MERGER OF THE TWO COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS

Over the last year there has been a quarterly meeting for both Community Safety Partnerships. They consider similar topics and following the Shared Service Review it was proposed that there should now be one team across Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council. Partners have been consulted and support the plan, as it would cut down on meetings. If this Committee and Cabinet agree to the plan, permission would be sought by the Police and Crime Commissioner before going ahead.

With regard to the draft plan, the final figures were not yet available until year end and it had been written as two plans for the time being. Priorities were the same for both districts with an emphasis on reducing house burglary, theft from vehicles and violent behaviour, to tackle anti-social behaviour, protect vulnerable individuals and communities, reduce the fear of crime and with the addition this year of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Crime statistics were available to help identify trends and hot spots. The figures show a reduction in crime within the Chiltern District and statistics would continue to be available separately for each district.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations contained in the draft Cabinet report be endorsed by the Community & Environment Overview Committee and that the comments of the Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet

45 UPDATE ON THE RECENT FLOOD IN CHILTERN DISTRICT

The Council had been working with the Environment Agency (EA), Transport for Bucks (TfB) and Amersham Town Council following the flooding in the district after the heavy rain from December 2013 to February 2014. The Emergency Plan was used and Officers worked with other agencies to co-ordinate the response and provide sand bags. In Chalfont St Giles, a pump was installed at the BT Exchange which was currently still being used. In

Chalfont St Peter, Officers worked with the County Council, Town Council, EA, TfB, members of the public and traders to pressure Thames Water into clearing the blockages in the sewer.

During the period, 6 households were affected, 11 businesses and 1 telephone exchange. The council had spent approximately £18,000 to minimise the effects of flooding in the district. .

Following the award of £75,000 funding from government to support businesses impacted by flooding the Council was developing a grant scheme in accordance with the guidance. Delegated approval was also sought to enable the Repair and Renewal Grant to be provided to businesses and homeowners at risk of further flooding by 1 April 2014.

It was recommended that the Head of Health and Housing in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Health and Housing be delegated to amend the Housing Financial Assistance Policy to develop the scheme in accordance with government guidance.

RESOLVED

That the draft Cabinet report be noted and that the comments of the Community & Environment Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

46 UPDATE ON AIRPORTS COMMISSION'S INTERIM REPORT

It was noted that any proposed expansion of Heathrow airport would have an impact on the district. The committee noted the conclusions of the Airports Commission Interim Report and awaited the further report expected at the end of the year.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

47 LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECLARATION ON TOBACCO CONTROL

A consistent area wide policy had been arranged by the Health and Wellbeing Board for all local authorities in Buckinghamshire. Members asked whether there would be any additional costs to be met by the Council by signing this declaration but were assured there were none as the requirements under the agreement were already being met by Council policies.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted and that the comments of the Community & Environment Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

NB Item 10 on the agenda; Pest Control and Dog Control Contracts was moved to the Private Reports below.

48 COMMUNITY GRANT AID SCHEME 2013/14 REVIEW

This was a revised scheme introduced last year. The evaluation process underwent key changes and the Members requested more involvement. A traffic light evaluation system was used to prioritise the grant aid given. Last year there were 53 applications for funding from a diverse range of activities. A new application form was used and 77% found it easier to use. The process was also more transparent, providing clear evidence for feedback for those who were unsuccessful. This year it was proposed to add an additional consideration for community events and/or projects that would commemorate World War I. Members considered that this addition should continue until 2018/9.

RESOLVED

That the draft Cabinet report be noted and that the comments of the Community & Environment Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

49 MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY TASK & FINISH GROUP

It was noted that the last meeting should be in April 2014 as the functions of this Committee would be absorbed by the Joint Waste Collection Committee. Councillor Jones thanked Councillors J F Warder, J S Ryman and H A Trevette for their support for the project.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Joint Scrutiny Task & Finish Group held on 23 January 2014 be noted.

50 MINUTES OF THE DISABILITY FOCUS GROUP

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Disability Focus Group held on 2 December 2013 be noted.

51 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Note: The relevant paragraph number from Part 1 of Schedule 12A is indicated at the end of the Minute heading.

52 PEST CONTROL AND DOG CONTROL CONTRACTS

Tenders have been received under the Framework Agreement with the Buckinghamshire District Councils for dog control, stray dog collection, dog waste collection and pest control. There was a separate tender process for each. Currently residents on income related benefits received free pest treatments. The committee were asked to consider whether or not they wished to withdraw this subsidy. Councillors discussed whether this would result in pest infections remaining untreated and spreading until they created greater costs for the Council to deal with. The Committee were minded to continue the subsidy considering the health implications and costs of attempting to force treatment. An annual budget could be set but it was noted that it would be difficult to set a limit on payments if the work was required. Members were interested to know what arrangements were made by neighbouring district councils and were informed that Wycombe gives a free rat treatment to all. Aylesbury Vale and South Bucks offer a subsidised service. It was agreed to continue the present arrangement and to report back at the end of the year.

RESOLVED

That the draft Cabinet report be noted and that the comments of the Community & Environment Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 7.56 pm