

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the SERVICES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE held on 15 MARCH 2016

PRESENT: Councillor L M Smith - Vice Chairman

Councillors: D J Bray
A S Hardie
C J Jackson
P M Jones
S A Patel
C J Rouse
J J Rush
N I Varley
E A Walsh

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors J A Burton, M Flys and M W Titterington

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors I A Darby, G K Harris, J E MacBean and C J Wertheim

51 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Vice-Chairman.

52 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

53 PRESENTATION FROM THAMES WATER

The Committee received a presentation from Huw Thomas (Thames Water) and Gareth Evans (eight₂O) on the Chalfont St Peter and Chesham drainage strategies. Following the presentation Members asked a number of questions, and during which the following key points were made:

Thames Water worked closely with the planning authority and reviewed applications for proposed developments. Developers were requested to put in place drainage strategies where Thames Water considered this appropriate, and the specific requirements would vary according to each development.

Concerns were raised in relation to surface water flooding that occurred in Chalfont St Giles in 2014 which impacted local businesses particularly badly. Although Thames Water worked closely with partner authorities responsible for surface water flooding Thames Water only had direct control over flooding from sewage.

A number of concerns specific to Chesham were raised. These included regular surface water flooding; pollution in the River Chess from sewage, over abstraction, and concerns regarding flooding in the Town Centre as a result of

sudden heavy rainfall. In response to a question it was advised that maps of the Thames Water pipe network and assets were publicly available from Thames Water's head office in Reading, and both the County and District Councils had access to this. Privately owned drains were not included on this. The mapping system was constantly updated to reflect the latest information. Thames Water confirmed that they were happy to attend meetings of the Chesham Action Group.

The majority of the district received tap water from Affinity rather than Thames Water. The pipe networks were separate, but both organisations worked together. There were plans to build a new reservoir in Abingdon and Affinity were part of the discussions on this.

The Chalfont St Peter and Chesham Drainage Strategies could be found using the search facility on the Thames Water website: www.thameswater.co.uk

The conclusions from the Chesham and Chalfont St Peter drainage strategies would be available around November 2017. Updates on the current documents were available on the Thames Water website.

In response to a question it was noted that connections to the London super sewer were currently being determined.

Members raised concerns that Thames Water's figures on housing growth were too low. Thames Water reviewed growth forecasts and worked closely with planning authorities although it was acknowledged that there was room for further improvement.

The process Thames Water used for reviewing proposed developments was outlined. In summary, developers signed off work themselves, but local planning authorities were responsible for checking with the developer that works had been completed and for monitoring compliance with planning conditions. It was confirmed that surface water and foul sewage pipelines should not be connected. Surface water systems were also designed to cope with significant one off flooding.

Members were encouraged to report any sewage flooding or water supply issues to Thames Water so that any problems could be logged and investigated.

RESOLVED –

That the presentation be noted.

54 BUCKS STRATEGIC FLOOD MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Committee received a report providing an update on the activities of the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Committee. During the discussion the following key points were made:

That flooding in the Chalfont St Peter area also had a major effect on people. It was noted that Section 19 flood investigations had resulted in a number of actions to mitigate the effect of floods.

That the Government's food insurance cost scheme be promoted.

In response to a point regarding the measurement of water runoff it was noted that Chiltern had been part of a national case study and the results of which were included as a background paper to the report.

The Environment Agency (EA) study on the Misbourne Valley was still at an early stage, but the EA were looking to set up a working group. This would include the Old Amersham area.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

55 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Committee received a report on air quality management in the district and Members discussed how air quality could be improved to meet EU and UK standards. During the discussion the following key points were made:

Pollution from vehicles in the Wapseys Wood area was raised. In response to concerns regarding leachate in the borehole it was noted that, since measures had been put in place, the pollution had reduced.

Pollution from vehicle emissions, such as benzene, was raised as a concern. It was noted that benzene was one of seven chemicals measured when assessing air quality and nowhere in the district had levels that came close to guideline thresholds. The increased use of electric vehicles was identified as one method of reducing air pollution from road traffic. Charging points were available at Council car parks.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

56 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ENERGY STRATEGY

The Committee considered the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy and were asked to recommend its adoption to the Cabinet. During the discussion it was noted that the policy had been written prior to changes being made to Government policy in relation to renewable energy.

Several Members, whilst welcoming the general direction that the policy was working towards, expressed concerns regarding the adoption of a strategy that lacked sufficient detail on how it would be achieved, failed to satisfactorily set out its aims and objectives, and was no longer up-to-date.

Other Members agreed that the document required changes and needed to be updated, but felt that it would be better to seek changes to the document

once it had been adopted. There was a general agreement that a strategy was required and it was noted that other Councils had agreed its adoption. Some Members remained concerned about recommending the adoption of a strategy that was currently considered inadequate.

On balance it was agreed to recommend that the strategy be adopted, subject to the comments of the Committee being forwarded to the Natural Environment Partnership for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to enable them to make the proposed changes. It was also recommended that the changes be made within a period of 12 months.

RESOLVED –

That on balance the Committee agrees to recommend the adoption of the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy to the Cabinet, subject to the comments of the Committee being forwarded to the Natural Environment Partnership for Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to enable them to make the following changes the strategy within a period of 12 months:

- 1. That further detail be included on how the strategy would be achieved;**
- 2. That the strategy be updated to take account of changes to the Government's policy on renewable energy; and,**
- 3. That the aims and objectives of the strategy be made more robust.**

Note: Councillor P Jones left the meeting at 7.30 pm.

57 UPDATE ON HOUSING WORKSHOP

A housing workshop event involving Chiltern and South Bucks District Council Members was held recently to provide information on housing issues and to enable Members to discuss and identify ideas, issues and options to take forward a shared Housing Strategy. The report provided information from the workshop and the Committee were asked to discuss the findings and the implications for affordable housing in the district.

At the Council meeting held on 24 February 2016 it was announced that a Member working group would be set up to explore options and make recommendations on delivering affordable housing in the district. This would be done by identifying capital and resources, such as land. The draft terms of reference for the group were tabled at the meeting for Members comments. During the discussion it was suggested that the quorum be increased to 3 Members or half of the total Members appointed. It was not intended this this would be joint group, and the terms of reference would be amended to remove the reference to South Bucks District Council.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

58 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

The Committee received a report outlining the performance of Council services against performance indicators and service objectives during September to October 2015. It was noted that a separate report reviewing the performance indicators for 2016/17 would be considered by the Cabinet on 5 April 2016. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Leader of the Cabinet advised that a number of performance indicators that had failed to meet targets related to housing and that the Cabinet were responding to this.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.56 pm