

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the SERVICES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (CDC) held on 31 JANUARY 2018

PRESENT: Councillor J Burton - Chairman
N Varley - Vice Chairman

Councillors: D Bray
M Harker
P Jones
C Rouse
J Cook

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors E Culverhouse, M Flys, P Hudson, C Jackson, S Patel, J Rush and L Smith

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J MacBean and M Smith

26 CHESHAM CULVERT UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Natalie Wren, Nick Elbourne, Lee James and Darsha Gill from the Environment Agency (EA) to the meeting.

The Environment Agency provided an update to the Committee on the Chesham culvert. It was reported that 40 metres of the worst sections of the culvert needing immediate attention had been replaced in September 2014. During this time, the EA anticipated that there could be a wider scheme for Chesham to address the failing infrastructure and flood risk to Chesham town centre.

It was noted that a public consultation on options for the culvert was undertaken in June 2017 and that there was generally positive feedback from the public for a scheme to take place. Following a shortlisting process, a diversion option (an open channel diversion of the Vale Brook alongside St. Mary's Way) was chosen by the EA as the preferred option. The Committee were advised that, if this option was taken forward, the majority of the flow of the river would come around the proposed new culvert and open channel. Benefits of this option included the fact that the option would address the public safety concern of potential collapse of the culvert and flood risk, make new sections of the culvert more accessible for maintenance, as well as provide a long term solution to flooding and flood risk. It was hoped that the diversion option would also provide wider environmental benefits to the area. The EA reported the difficulties in finding a solution for Chesham due to the presence of fluvial, surface and ground water in the culvert. It was noted that

the EA had permissive powers to carry out maintenance, improvements and/or construction works to manage flood risk.

It was reported that Chiltern District Council (CDC) officers preferred a diversion option into Skottowes Pond, although this option had been discarded by the EA due to obstacles relating to the landscape as well as the need to install and continuously maintain a pump. Members were advised that pumps were avoided where possible and there had been numerous examples of pumps failing across the country. Further, a pump would not fit in with the sustainability aspirations of the Chiltern & South Bucks Joint Local Plan.

Members noted that consultants were due to carry out technical work on the culvert, but at present work had been suspended until an option could be agreed upon by all stakeholders. The Committee were presented with previous CCTV survey images showing the poor state of certain sections of the culvert. It was anticipated that the worst sections of the culvert would fail in approximately 10 years time but that this was subject to the severity and frequency of weather events. The EA were anticipating undertaking a further CCTV survey shortly to assess the current state of the culvert. The Committee were informed that contributions would be required from stakeholders and partners for the work to be undertaken. Further, that the EA would ask for a contribution from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC).

Members agreed that a 'do nothing' scenario was not an option. Further, that the results of an up to date CCTV survey would be extremely helpful for assessing the current state of the culvert. It was noted that the installation of pumps had never been a preferred option for Members. Whilst some Members of the Committee were in support of the diversion option chosen by the EA, others felt that it would not be a suitable option as it could affect the viability of Chesham. It was noted that, if this diversion option was chosen, the number of car parking spaces in the Star Yard Car Park would be reduced potentially having a negative impact on the businesses in Chesham. The Committee agreed that regeneration of the area would need to be part of the solution.

The Director of Services welcomed the commitment to embark upon work with the EA to reduce flood risk in Chesham. In response to a question as to whether the costs of emergency repairs were charged to riparian owners, the EA advised that this was the case. Further, the EA had been allocated some government funding to support the carrying out of emergency repairs, however, it was unclear if a similar provision would be allocated to flood risk management from 2021. With regards to the next steps for the scheme, the Committee were in support of the Council engaging with its advisors concerning the technical work, the findings of which were to be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. Following the discussion, the Committee

RESOLVED:

- **that the comments of the Services Overview Committee be forwarded to the Cabinet.**

Note 1: Councillor C Rouse left the meeting at 19:11.

27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2017 were agreed by the Committee and signed by the Chairman as correct record.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29 28 DAY NOTICE

The Committee considered the 28 day notice and decided that there were no additional items to be added at this time.

RESOLVED:

- **To note the 28 day Notice for Cabinet.**

30 SERVICE PLAN SUMMARIES 2018-19

The service plan summaries were considered by the Committee. The summaries formed part of the Council's performance management framework and looked at the aims and achievements of the service areas. The full service plans were attached at the supplementary agenda 1.

The Committee agreed that the service plan summaries for next year should contain key actions and changes since the previous year. Members suggested that to further streamline the document, the comparison information was not required and the full service plans could be published online.

RESOLVED:

- **That the service plan summaries be noted.**

31 PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2017-18

The Committee received the annual report outlining performance of Councils services against performance indicators (PIs) and service objectives for quarter

2 (2017-18). Detailed performance tables were at Appendices A and B. It was noted that the majority of total PIs were on target. 5 PIs were seen to be off target and Members were advised that the priority PI relating to long term sickness absence should improve as some of the employees on long term sickness absence have since left employment with the Councils.

There was some discussion relating to the priority PIs. Members enquired as to the Councils' plans to combat the shortage of affordable housing in 2018/19 and were informed that a number of developments to increase affordable housing supply were anticipated to come through the planning process. Members asked that an update report on waste and recycling activities and communications be brought to the next Committee meeting. Further, that the report focus on what the Councils are doing to educate communities on reducing household waste.

RESOLVED:

- **That the report be noted.**

Note 2: Councillor D Bray left the meetings 19:38.

32 CHILTERN AND SOUTH BUCKS OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

The Committee considered a Cabinet report informing Members of the completion of the Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Strategy that would inform the Joint Local Plan once finalised. A further public consultation with town and parish councils, as well as other agencies, was reported as the next step for the strategy. The Chiltern and South Bucks Open Space Strategy was at Appendix 1.

In response to a question, Members were informed that sports fields had been incorporated into the strategy and that the Council also has a plain pitch strategy which would be considered by Sport England.

RESOLVED:

- **That the report be noted.**

Note 3: Councillor M Harker left the meeting 19:47.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm