

HEALTH & HOUSING POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 26 September 2013

Present: Mrs Woolveridge (Chairman)
Dr Matthews, Mr Pepler, Dr. Pope and Mrs Simmonds

Apologies for absence: Mrs Burrows, Dr A Dhillon and Mr Oxley

11. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Councillor Woolveridge was sad to announce the death of Carmel Harrison who until recently had worked for the Council as Project Support Officer in the Housing Team.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group held on 26 June 2013 were received.

It was noted that paragraphs 4 and 5 of item 1 should be deleted as the paragraphs were duplicated in item 2 of the minutes.

13. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

The PAG received outside body reports from members as follows:

- Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust - Councillor Pepler reported on the meeting held on 31 July 2013.
- Padstones - Councillor Cranmer reported on the meeting held on 25 September 2013.

The PAG also received verbal updates on the following:

Age UK Buckinghamshire - Councillor Simmonds

- Open day due to be held in Saunderton - workshop to take place on the issue of social isolation.
- An Age UK shop due to open on Aylesbury High Street in January 2014.
- Councillor Simmonds to send copies of the Annual Report to Members of the PAG once available.

Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee - Councillor Matthews

- Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust has been put into special measures following the Keogh review.
- The Committee has met on a regular basis to discuss the Keogh report and to consider the remedial actions proposed by Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust. A working group has been established to go through the Keogh Report in detail.

Healthy Communities Partnership - Councillor Woolveridge

- The partnership had yet to meet but would be meeting next month.
- Each district would be responsible for championing a public health priority. The priority for South Bucks would be Healthy Eating. The public health champion for South Bucks would be Lead Member for Health and Housing, supported by officers from the Public Health Team at Buckinghamshire County Council.

L+Q Shires Neighbourhood Committee - Councillor Woolveridge

- L+Q were looking to develop a common policy for how gas checks should be carried out.
- A future priority for L+Q will be to help tenants into employment.
- The PAG noted some of the organisations in South Bucks which had benefited from grants allocated by L+Q.

14. CEMETERY CHARGES

The PAG were provided with the results of an exercise to benchmark cemetery charges and were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to recommend to Cabinet an increase in charges for the Council's cemeteries and Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens.

Members were asked to consider whether cemetery charges should be increased and if so whether they should be increased by 10% or 20%. The reasons given for increasing the charges were as follows:

- Maintaining a cemetery was costly and sales were difficult to predict. In 2012-13 there was a shortfall of £10,000 against budget;
- Charges were relatively low compared to many other authorities.

The PAG were reassured that an increase in charges by either 10% or 20% would be unlikely to significantly affect demand as charges would still remain reasonable compared to many other authorities.

The PAG were of the opinion that cemetery charges should be increased by 20%. The PAG were also in support of the proposal to increase the non-residents surcharge at the cemeteries from £100 to £200 as the Council's burial charges for non-residents were the lowest by some way compared to many other authorities.

In addition, the PAG agreed with the proposed increase in charges at Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens as set out in Appendix D of the report. These had been adjusted to match present demand with higher charges for popular parts of the gardens.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that from 1 April 2014

1. non-resident surcharges be increased from £100 to £200
2. cemetery charges be increased by 20%
3. charges at Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens be increased, as set out in appendix D of the report

15. ELECTRIC VEHICLE RAPID CHARGING POSTS

The PAG considered a report which notified Members of the funding for the installation of three double Rapid Charging Posts for electric vehicles (EV's). Members of the PAG were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to support the initiative and approve the process of implementation.

The PAG were advised of the awarding of funding for the installation of three double Rapid Charging Posts for electric vehicles (EV's) to be installed across the District. The PAG were made aware of the benefits to installing Rapid Charging Points in key locations across the District, as set out in paragraph 4.6 of the report. The PAG also noted that whilst some initial in kind contribution would be required, there would be no further capital or on going revenue costs.

The PAG were advised that Environment PAG had considered the report at their last meeting and had indicated their support for the initiative.

In the discussion which followed, the PAG also endorsed the initiative.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that support be given to the initiative and the process of implementation be approved.

16. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING - HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

The PAG received a report which informed Members of the request by the Healthy Communities Partnership, for each member authority to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to support the delivery of Healthy Communities.

The Healthy Communities Partnership had been established for some years as the main partnership body for public health in Buckinghamshire. The membership included all 4 District Councils, Buckinghamshire County Council, Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust, Oxford Health, Community Impact Buckinghamshire and NHS commissioners (Clinical Commissioning Groups).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) had now been developed which would enable local organisations to better work in partnership to improve the health and wellbeing of the local population.

In response to a question, it was noted that the details, as to how the task and finish groups would operate, were still to be confirmed by the Public Health Team at Bucks County Council.

The PAG were pleased to endorse the Memorandum of Understanding.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the Memorandum of Understanding be adopted and the Council's participation and commitment to the Healthy Communities Partnership be confirmed.

17. UPDATE TO SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY

The PAG received a report which asked the PAG to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to recommend to Cabinet that the updated Contaminated Land Strategy be approved.

The Council had produced an updated contaminated land strategy, as a consequence of new, legally binding statutory guidance on contaminated land which came into effect on 6th April. A number of changes had been made to the new version of the strategy, which were set out in section 3 of the report. Members were advised that due to a lack of funding, further site investigations were likely to be undertaken only as part of the development process.

In the discussion which followed, the PAG indicated its support for the new strategy and advised the Portfolio Holder to recommend to Cabinet that it be approved.

The PAG also supported the proposal set out in the report to remove the two performance indicators (as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report) for contaminated land as they had become redundant as a result of the review.

As a result of the new guidance and subsequent review of the Contaminated Land Strategy, Members agreed that the informatives currently added to local land searches were no longer relevant and potentially misleading and therefore agreed that these informatives would no longer be provided. Specific requests relating to contaminated land notices, the register and regarding consultation would be responded to and the separate option to request information through an environmental search would remain.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

1. the updated contaminated land strategy be approved.
2. the two performance indicators (as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report) for contaminated land, which have become redundant as a result of the review, be removed.
3. the informatives currently added to local land searches be no longer provided as they were no longer relevant and potentially misleading - specific requests relating to contaminated land notices, the register and regarding consultation to be responded to and the separate option to request information through an environmental search to remain.

18. COMMUTED SUMS UPDATE REPORT - START AUGUST 2013

The PAG received a revised version of a report which provided Members with an update on commuted sum payments. The PAG were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to increase the spending authority in line with that previously agreed, which was subject to a temporary adjustment while commuted sums were collected.

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Having noted the current financial position related to commuted sums already received by the Council, the PAG considered the proposals set out in the report regarding expenditure.

The PAG also noted the number of affordable homes provided by accepting commuted sums in lieu of on-site development, as well as a projection of commuted sum payments.

The PAG were in support of the recommendations set out in the report.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

1. an increase in Your Choice fees to £60,000 to facilitate the equity loan product and Catalyst Housing Group fees at £2,000 per unit be approved.
2. an increase in the Buy-Back Acquisition funding to £1,250,000 in line with the service level agreement with London and Quadrant be approved.
3. the expenditure of £3,575,150, as detailed in the 2nd column in Table 2 of the report, be approved.

19. PEST AND DOG CONTROL FROM OCTOBER 2013

The PAG received a report which informed Members that the tender for the for pest and dog control service was due to start from April 2014 and sought advice from the PAG as to whether the Portfolio Holder should recommend to the Cabinet that current arrangements be continued beyond 30th October 2013 or until the start of the new contract.

Members were advised that whilst it was no longer possible to call off further services or to enter into a new contract in relation to them with SDK, the Council could ask SDK to extend the existing service provision on the same terms and conditions up to the point that a new contract is awarded. It was noted that it would not be practical to tender for a five month contract for these services.

The PAG were in support of extending the service currently provided by SDK for a period of five months or until the framework agreement for a new contract is in place.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the services currently provided by SDK in relation to pest control and dog control/collection be extended for a period of five months, or until the framework agreement for a new contract is in place.

20. CONSULTATION ON FILMING ON THE HIGHWAY

The PAG received a report on a proposal by Buckinghamshire County Council to promote a private bill to gain legal powers to make it easier to film movies, television shows advertisements and other film productions on the highway.

It was noted the Environment PAG, which considered the report at its meeting on 4 September 2013, whilst supporting the proposal in principle, felt that film notices should be posted at least one week in advance, rather than the 24 hours as stated in the proposal, to minimise disruption for residents. These comments had been submitted to Buckinghamshire County Council in response to the consultation exercise which closed on 9 September 2013.

The PAG were in support of the comments made by the Environment PAG on 4 September 2013.

RESOLVED that the proposal and response to the consultation be noted.

21. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The PAG received a report providing an update on the Environment Health Improvement Plan.

It was noted that the entry on contaminated land would be deleted from the plan following this meeting of the PAG.

With regards to the expansion of Heathrow, the PAG noted that there was a need to take into account the proposals by the Davies Commission.

22. HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

The PAG received a report providing an update on the Housing Service Action Plan. The PAG discussed the reasons why the target of the number of households in temporary accommodation had been exceeded.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Aviation Report

Members of the PAG received an information report, which provided Members with an update on what had occurred since Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils responded to the Government's consultation on the Draft Aviation Policy Framework in October 2012.

The report set out the main changes which had been made to the Aviation Policy Framework as a result of the consultation. The final Framework was published in March 2013.

The report also outlined the main highlights from the Transport Select Committee Aviation Strategy report, which focused on aviation capacity in the UK, and Department of Transport's response to the Select Committee's inquiry.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Verbal update on Green Deal

- Green Deal Together CIC was now registered with Department of Energy and Climate Change.
- Over 800 parties had registered an interest with Green Deal Together.
- The company is in talks with providers to seek ECO funding.
- An opportunity has arisen for a local authority to lead on a bid to target hard to insulate homes. Members requested that more information on this potential bid be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED that a report be submitted to the next meeting.

Verbal update on implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act

- The provisions of the Act would come into effect on 1 October 2013.
- The licence fees had been set.
- Operators must submit their completed application, licence fee and Basic Disclosure certificate between 1 October and before 15 October 2013.
- Licences to become effective from 1 December 2013, which was when the enforcement provisions would come into force.
- Enforcement would be carried out by the Council's Environmental Health Team, in partnership with the Environment Agency and Police.
- The Council had written to all known scrap metal businesses to make them aware of the new requirements.
- Members were reassured that information would also be put on the website.

RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.35 pm