

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 18 June 2014

Present: Mr Naylor (Chairman)
Mr Bradford, Miss Hazell, Mrs Plant, Mrs Royston and Mr Walters

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 19 March 2014 were received.

2. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

3. BEACONSFIELD OLD TOWN COMMON LAND - PARKING AND PROPOSED COMMON LAND SWAP PROPOSALS AND TARMAC REPAIRS

The PAG received a report and a presentation by RTA Associates on the results of the consultation for the proposed parking and land swap on Beaconsfield Common Land. The PAG noted the following:

- Residents, shops and businesses within a 500m. radius of the Ends were consulted;
- A consultation pack was prepared and around 1600 were distributed.
- A public drop in session was arranged at the Fitzwilliams Centre on 19 February between 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. Invitation to the event was included in the consultation packs;
- 905 responses received (assumed 295 of these were from one respondent therefore not included in analysis);
- Residents had a fairly balance view - supportive of limited waiting but not charges;
- Business had a consistently negative view on all aspects of the consultation;
- Small number of shops responded - most of them were positive;
- Overall the consultation produced a negative response

In the discussion which followed, it was noted that there were three distinct users with very different issues. The PAG were of the opinion that the consultation results had shown that there was no clear mandate to progress with the introduction of limited parking controls and swapping of part of the common land to an adjacent grassed area. The Council wanted to offer something overall for Beaconsfield, but had not succeeded.

The report also sought funding for urgent tarmac repairs on the common land due to the poor state of the existing car park surfacing on the northern side of London End. The PAG supported the proposal that funding of £45,000 be added to the capital programme for the urgent repairs.

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

1. as the outcome of the consultation was that there was no clear mandate to progress with the introduction of limited parking controls and swapping of part of the common land to an adjacent grassed area, no further action be taken and the common land be continued to be managed by the Council within current constraints
2. funding of £45,000 be added to the capital programme for urgent tarmac repairs on the common land.

4. **CHRISTMAS FREE PARKING**

The PAG considered a report as whether to offer free parking at the Council's car parks on two Saturdays in December 2014 in order to encourage the use of local shops within the District. The report also set out a proposal for the matter to be dealt with under delegated authority in future years.

It was noted that whilst there were no figures for assessing the benefit to local traders of having a free Saturday, the cost to the Council of arranging free days would be negligible. The PAG were of the opinion that the two most suitable Saturdays to have free parking on would be 13 and 20 December 2014.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, who were in support of the proposals, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

1. approval be given to allow free parking in the Council's car parks on 13 and 20 December (two Saturdays) in December 2014.
2. authority be delegated to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to allow free parking for two Saturdays in subsequent years in December in the Council's car parks.

5. **BURNHAM SCHOOL CAR PARKING PLAN**

The PAG considered a report seeking authority to allow free parking at Summers Road car park for parents dropping off and picking up children from St Peters School in Burnham.

In order to alleviate congestion around the school, the Headteacher of St Peters School has requested that parents be allowed to park free of charge in the Council's Summers Road Car Park during peak times for a trial period of six months.

It was estimated that the loss of income to the Council from allowing free parking during those times would be modest. Furthermore, the school was prepared to deal with the administration of permits for the proposed scheme so there would be no other direct costs to the Council.

The PAG supported the proposal to review the scheme before the end of the 6 month trial period.

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

1. a trial scheme be introduced to allow free parking at Summers Road car park for parents of children at St Peter's School.
2. authority be delegated authority to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to agree the details of the scheme.

6. **FLATS SERVICE REVIEW REPORT**

The PAG received a report on the proposed service review for flats. The aim of the review was to provide residents with an improved service and thereby increase the amount of recycling collected and resident participation in flats by bringing collection services in line with the rest of the district.

Approximately 3000 properties across 200 sites have remained on either a weekly black sack or weekly bulk collection due to being unsuitable for the standard food waste collection service. As every block of flats differs in terms of building features, management structures and types of residents, it would be counterproductive to offer one 'blanket' service to all flats.

The PAG noted the proposed collection methods as set out in section 5 of the report and appendix B which depicted what the flats waste and recycling collection service could look like depending on the best solution for each site. With regard to the ongoing provision of liners to flats in order to

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maximise participation and the amount of food waste collected, it was proposed that this be reviewed following the rollout.

Due to the number of properties to be reviewed and the complexities involved in flats collections, additional staffing resources would be required. The PAG were therefore asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to recommend to Cabinet an extension of the Recycling Assistant post for a further six months.

In the discussion which followed, Members expressed their thanks to officers for all their hard work in implementing the effective new waste and recycling service.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, which was supportive of the proposals, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

1. an additional £13,994 Revenue budget to fund a six month extension of the Recycling Assistant Post be approved.
2. the ongoing provision of liners to flats in order to maximise participation and the amount of food waste collected be reviewed following the rollout.

7. GARDEN WASTE RENEWALS

The PAG received a report which asked Members to advise the Portfolio Holder on the internal policy of how garden waste renewals should be handled for 2015/16 and beyond for the subscription based garden waste collection scheme which started on 31st March 2014.

The report set out two possible options:

- Option 1: a resident's renewal date to be 12 months after their first payment is received; or
Option 2: the renewal date for all residents to be the first day of the new financial year.

In supporting option 2, the PAG noted a number of key considerations as set out in section 3.2 of the report, including the implications of a sliding scale of charges and the potential early renewal discount reduction. Members were in support of the proposal to delegate authority to the Director of Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to agree a further early bird discount scheme.

During the discussion the PAG stressed the importance of encouraging more residents to take up the garden waste collection scheme, especially those residents whose black bins often have garden waste in them. It was noted that that officers would be going out with the crews to check garden waste and educate residents.

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

1. option 2 be agreed and the key considerations as set out in the report be noted.
2. authority be delegated to the Director of Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to agree a further early bird discount scheme for early renewal at the agreed reduced price.

8. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FUTURE

The PAG received a report seeking agreement to extend the joint grounds maintenance contract with Wycombe and Chiltern District Council.

The Council already operated a joint contract with John O'Connor (Grounds Maintenance). The contract was for an initial term of five years from 1 April 2010 and could jointly be extended for up to 3 years. The numerous advantages of a joint contract were listed in paragraph 4.1 of the report. It was noted that the approach would not pre-judge the outcomes of the management service review which would take place later this year.

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The PAG were advised that Bucks County Council were currently looking into possibility of devolving grass cutting to parishes. No extension could be made to the joint grounds maintenance contract until Bucks County Council has made a decision. The PAG were therefore asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to recommend to Cabinet that delegated authority be given to Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to agree the length of the extension of the contract once Bucks County Council have made their decision regarding devolving grass cutting to parishes.

In the discussion which followed, the PAG indicated its support for the delegation.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that authority be delegated to the Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to agree the length of the extension of the contract.

9. WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE UPDATE

The PAG received a report providing an update on the progression of the new refuse and recycling collection service in relation to several issues including:

- Paper Sort Facility and UPM Contract;
- Dropmore Road Depot;
- Food Waste;
- Recycling;
- Refuse;
- Garden Waste; and
- Publicity

The PAG was pleased to note that, although officers have been very busy and stretched, the service was proceeding as planned and was producing the projected diversion rate. The average diversion rate for waste collection from households was 56.4% as opposed to the previous rate before the scheme was rolled out of around 30%. Based upon national performance in 12/13 (latest confirmed figures) this would put the Council in the top 30 out of 352 Councils which was a significant step change.

The PAG also received a presentation from the Head of Environment on the new Joint Waste Strategy 2014-20 produced by the Waste Partnership for Buckinghamshire. The PAG were advised that a new joint strategy was required as the old strategy was out of date and no longer fit for purpose. The PAG noted the various aspects of the new joint strategy including the objectives, delivery plan and key targets.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, which supported the Joint Waste Strategy the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the Joint Waste Strategy 2014-20 be adopted.

The meeting terminated at 7.45 pm