

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 20 November 2018

Present: L Sullivan (Chairman)
L Hazell

Also Present: N Naylor and D Smith

Apologies for absence: M Bradford, G Hollis, J Lowen-Cooper and B Harding

36. MINUTES

The notes of the Environment PAG held on 7 June 2018 were approved.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

39. CURRENT ISSUES

The Head of Environment was asked to update the meeting on the progress of the Joint Waste contract and informed the Committee that there would be regular updates. The Joint Waste Committee would be meeting next on 3 December 2018 and Members would be updated following this.

40. PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2019/20

It was noted that there had been notification of a new authority in 2020 but there was still a legal requirement to set the budgets for 2019/20. The District Council objective of delivering its services in a financially prudent way was still valid and the budget process had been undertaken in the same way as in previous years. The changes proposed were listed in Table 4.4 on page 5.

The recommendations of the Task & Finish Group, set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in response to budget gaps, had resulted in action taken, as listed in table 5.7 on page 7. These recommendations included the Waste service contract retender, reviewing car park charges, waste service charges and the use of

car park space. Councillors were pleased that these recommendations had been taken on board as it had increased the level of Member participation.

There was a query about the cost of staff transfer to Customer Services from Waste which would take effect early in the next financial year and further details would be distributed by email.

RESOLVED

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** the following items for onward submission to Cabinet:

- The 2019/20 revenue budget
- The 2019/20 fees and charges with the exception of car parking charges.

41. SBDC PARKING

The Members were presented with options for small incremental changes to the parking fees to maximise the use of parking facilities across South Bucks and meet the needs of the local towns and villages. There was a balance to be found between the needs of long term commuters using the car parks, local workers and short stay shoppers. Some car parks were also found to be underutilised, whilst others were congested.

With regard to Gerrards Cross Car Park, the meeting was informed that the cost of parking in the nearby Chiltern Railways car park had just been increased. Chiltern Railways normally gave advanced warning of any such changes but this had not been received and needed further investigation. There had been considerable investment in the parking facilities in the District; all car parks have been awarded the Safer Parking Park Mark status and there was parking enforcement. Members were mindful of the need to balance the budget.

Members discussed current existing Sunday and Bank Holiday charges, noting that some neighbouring authorities didn't charge for Sunday or Bank Holidays. Members noted that Sunday and Bank holiday occupancy rates were good and were not minded to make any changes at this time.

Overall, the PAG decided that it would like to see some further information on the impact of Chiltern Railways charges increases before making a final decision on the level of increase in the Council's charges and that this should be brought to the next PAG for final decision.

RESOLVED

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder AGREED to RECOMMEND that further information be bought back to the next PAG meeting.

42. **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING**

The PAG was asked to consider the option of introducing electric vehicle charging points in South Bucks District to promote sustainable transport and provide car parking options for all motoring groups. There were currently no charging points provided in South Bucks Car Parks.

Firstly it was considered whether cars using a charging point should also pay the parking hourly fee. Alternatively, they could be charged the parking fee but given the electricity for free. It was noted that initially when electric vehicles were introduced, local authorities exempted customers who were charging their vehicles from paying the car park tariffs to encourage take up. With the potential uptake in users however, they had to consider the operational and development costs.

There was agreement in principle that introducing charging points in car parks was something to be supported, but it was recommended that a local consultation of car park users be undertaken to discover the preferred locations and likely usage and take up. It was noted that only 2.4% of new cars sold were currently electric and that this group may be hard to engage with. There was the view that shift to electric/hybrid vehicles would be gradual, and this matter be brought back to the PAG when additional information from user surveys had been collected.

RESOLVED

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder AGREED to RECOMMEND that further information be bought back to the next PAG meeting.

43. **REVIEW OF REMAINING RECYCLING CENTRES**

The report was considered by the Joint Waste Collection Committee on 3 October 2018 and it was recommended that all recycling centres within the three council areas be closed. After extensive consultation, with the increase in kerbside collection for residents and the misuse of centres, it was recommended that they be closed before commencement of the new Joint Waste Collection contract in spring 2020.

Members were concerned about the existing charity bins that were sometimes located with the recycling bins and where they would go. It was suggested that they could often be relocated, as seen in local pub or supermarket car parks and the team would work with the charity to find a suitable location. This then would release much needed car parking bay space in the current car parks.

Having considered the present levels of contamination of materials, fly tipping problems, litter issues, safety concerns and increase in obvious trade waste material, it was generally agreed that the remaining centres be removed. However, it was requested that this information be explained to the public through the communications team before removal, through appropriate messages on local car park notices and in local press.

RESOLVED

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder AGREED to RECOMMEND to Cabinet that the remaining eight recycling centres (bring sites) in the South Bucks District be closed with notice to public in advance.

44. **CHARGING FOR REFUSE AND RECYCLING CONTAINERS IN THE SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT**

The meeting considered the proposed charges for replacement containers that had been lost or damaged. It was noted that the recommendation was being made to be in line with those already set for Chiltern and Wycombe District residents. There was concern that this could be unfair if the containers were stolen or damaged by contractor in the waste disposal process but it was advised that all requests would be sensitively processed and discussed with the resident. Residents would be encouraged to look after their containers. Items damaged by the waste collection process would be replaced free of charge.

RESOLVED

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

1. That charges to residents for waste containers be introduced where they are lost, stolen, damaged by a resident or not present when a resident moves into a property.
2. That the charges levied be in line with those already set for residents in the Chiltern and Wycombe Districts.

The meeting terminated at 7.25 pm