



Cabinet

Wednesday, 6 February 2019 at 6.00 pm

Room 5 - Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham

A G E N D A

Item

8. Policy Advisory Group Minutes (available in supplement pack) *(Pages 3 - 18)*

Customer Services and Business Support PAG – 19 November 2018
Environment PAG – 20 November 2018
Healthy Communities PAG – 21 November 2018
Planning and Economic Development PAG – 29 November 2018
Resources PAG – 6 December 2018

Note: All reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman's discretion.

Membership: Cabinet

Councillors: N Naylor(Leader)
J Read(Deputy Leader)
B Gibbs
P Hogan
D Smith
L Sullivan

Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 13 March 2019

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CUSTOMER SERVICES AND BUSINESS SUPPORT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 19 November 2018

Present: D Smith (Chairman)
M Bezzant

Apologies for D Saunders and R Reed
absence:

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors R Reed and D Saunders.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the Customer Services and Business Support PAG held on 17 September 2018 were approved.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

29. PORTFOLIO BUDGET REPORT 2019/20

Members considered the Portfolio Budgets 2019/20 report which provided information on the draft revenue budget for 2019/20, including the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year, and the implications of the establishment of a unitary authority 2020/21. The report further provided summary information on the budgets and highlighted issues for consideration. Detailed information could be seen in the accompanying booklet.

During the discussion, the following key points were raised:

- Regardless of the decision to create a new unitary authority in Buckinghamshire from 2020/21 this did not affect the requirement the Council had to set a legal and prudent budget for 2019/20 that addressed the Council's aims and objectives, which were set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It would be necessary at a corporate level to make provision for the initial transition costs to the new unitary authority that would be incurred in 2019/20, this would be done when setting the final budget in February 2019 when there was more clarity around the transition process.
- The final settlement from Central Government would be announced on 6 December and the final draft budgets would be consolidated for consideration by the Cabinet in February in consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The following items included in the report were highlighted to the PAG: Budget assumptions; summary revenue budgets and movements alongside the current year's

budget; risks; task and finish group recommendations and opportunities and plans for improvement.

- IT systems would still need to be up to date and functioning regardless of the structure of a new authority. A number of software contracts and product licenses ran until 2020 and it was said that there would be costs involved in potentially extending these or making changes which could not be avoided. Details would be included in the IT Strategy report which would be going to February's meeting of the Joint Committee. The move to cloud would make any potential geographical move smoother and was a common theme in each authority's ICT Strategy.
- Knowledge from other authorities who had experienced re-organisation had shown that not a great deal of changes to systems had been made at the date of commencement of the new authority. It was said that it was likely each authority's respective IT systems would still be running in April 2020 whilst work on integration, interfacing and aligning systems was taking place.
- The staff salary inflation of 2% had been agreed by the Council and was built in to the draft budgets. Gas inflation had been factored in at 0% based on the number of fixed period contracts which remained valid for the coming year.
- The cancellation of the Customer Experience Programme would not be cost effective at this stage. The contract was now in place with the software providers and the implementation team were in post. The solution would be scalable to be delivered across the County and each authority was looking at similar programmes to enable more digital service delivery. The breakeven point of the programme was planned to occur prior to the commencement of the new unitary authority.

Having considered the advice of the Policy Advisory Group, the Portfolio Holder agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet to approve the following items:

1. The 2019/20 revenue budget.
2. The 2019/20 fees and charges.

30. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Head of Customer Services reported that the Customer Experience Programme had continued to progress positively. Service areas had worked well with the implementation team to assist with the design of process workflows and the creation of online forms. For the service areas included in phase 1 of the programme (waste, environmental health and licensing) the system was ready to be built and the implementation team was waiting for the test environment to be released.

Work had been completed with Business Support on system integrations and progress was being made on integrating the systems used by waste with the new software. A project was also ongoing to address channel shift with different persona groups having been created to establish how best to help customers.

The complaints procedure was to be reviewed and Member feedback would be sought on this. The design and content of the website was also being looked at and GOSS would be holding a workshop, which all Members were welcome to attend at 5.30 p.m. on Monday 26 November at the Chiltern District Council offices. It was further clarified that news stories and the website front page had remained the responsibility of the communications team however technical issues and electronic forms were now dealt with by the implementation team.

The PAG was advised that the timetable for the programme had been readjusted, however remained on schedule to meet the end dates for phase 1 as initially set out.

An update was also provided on the transition of Northgate staff to the Council's Revenues team. This was completed successfully with no impact to customers, and only minor issues had been identified during the transition and these were being addressed.

The meeting terminated at 6.30 pm

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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

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 21 November 2018

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
D Anthony, P Bastiman, Dr W Matthews and D Pepler

Apologies for
absence: M Bezzant

81. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

82. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Healthy Communities PAG held on 2 October 2018 were approved.

It was noted that information on Heart of Bucks and SBDC grant funding allocations had now been provided to Councillor Dr Matthews.

83. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

The Group received a written report from Councillor D Pepler on the meeting of the Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust held on 26 September 2018.

84. **COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE**

The PAG received a report which updated Members on the work being carried out by the Community Safety team. The report highlighted some of the recent projects and activities which the team had been involved with, focusing on the Council's aims of reducing crime, reducing the fear of crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. The Chairman asked that consideration be given to how the various initiatives could be evaluated, to gauge levels of success.

A question was raised regarding rural crime, relating to recent incidents which had occurred in Iver. It was advised in response that Thames Valley Police had previously organised events focusing on rural crime but more specific information would be requested.

Regarding Modern Slavery, officers advised that there was a "Safe Car Wash" app which could be used to report concerns regarding exploitation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

85. **COMMUNITY WELLBEING PLANS ANNUAL REVIEW**

A report was presented which set out the projects that had been delivered in the first year of the South Bucks Community and Wellbeing Plan. Members were taken through the objectives and key outcomes of the Plan as listed in the report.

A question was raised regarding the closure of the Citizens' Advice Bureau service in Iver. It was advised that this would be investigated and a response would be communicated to Councillor Matthews.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

86. **PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2019/20**

Members received a report which provided information on the draft revenue budget and the draft fees and charges for 2019/20. The PAG were advised that, despite the decision to create a unitary council in Buckinghamshire from April 2020, the Council was still required to set a balanced budget for 2019/20.

Paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4 of the report showed the net budget figures for the portfolio and the key changes from the current year. It was advised that the transfers to Customer Services were part of the Customer Experience Strategy where it was proposed that two staff members be moved across from Environmental Health and Licensing. The main risk for the portfolio was still the cost around homelessness, although savings would be made with the delivery of temporary accommodation at the Bath Road Depot site and other temporary housing schemes. The recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Group on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the actions taken in response to these were detailed in paragraph 5.7 of the report.

In the discussion which followed, the below key points were raised:

- There would not be a significant change to the fees and charges for 2019/20. Revised charges not included in the appendix to the report had been set but these had not yet been received by finance.
- Officers would be working to improve communications between the Planning and Licensing teams focused on identifying new mobile homes which would require Licences.
- It was hoped that initiatives such as the private sector leasing scheme would address any potential overspend on homelessness.
- The homelessness prevention budget would be used for one-off payments, such as clearing small rent arrears, which would contribute towards the Council's duty to prevent homelessness, and to fund services delivered by partner agencies such as Citizens Advice and Connection Support.
- Officers advised that Universal Credit had been introduced in South Bucks earlier in 2018 and work had been undertaken to ensure the Housing team was prepared for any impacts.
- Two temporary officer posts in the Housing team had been introduced to increase capacity in the team following the introduction of the new Homelessness Reduction Act which had placed more pressure on the Council's Housing services. Members

requested that a report be brought to the PAG after April 2019 to assess the impact of the new Act on the workload of the Housing team.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the 2019/20 revenue budget and 2019/20 fees and charges be approved.

87. **HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

The PAG received an update report from the Head of Healthy Communities which covered the ongoing work within the service. Further to the report, Members were advised that the consultation on the Bucks Home Choice Allocation Policy had opened and would close on 7 January 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

88. **ACQUISITION OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

A report was presented which updated Members on the position regarding the proposed acquisition of residential properties by the Council and the overall programme of projects aimed at reducing the use of nightly booked temporary accommodation.

The PAG were advised that a number of projects had been taken forward to reduce the use of nightly booked temporary accommodation, including:

- Private Sector Leasing Scheme with Paradigm Housing
- Property Acquisitions by Bucks Housing Association
- Bath Road temporary accommodation scheme

These projects, along with work on homelessness case management, had represented a 45% reduction overall in the use of nightly booked accommodation. Therefore, the Council had not yet taken forward any direct acquisitions of residential properties, although this would be kept open as a possibility to deliver temporary accommodation going forward. Members were pleased to note the progress that had been made on reducing the cost of temporary accommodation.

A question was raised regarding the impact of the decision to create a single unitary council for Buckinghamshire on homelessness applicants. Officers advised that the duty to house was with the Local Housing Authority (LHA) however it was not yet clear whether a single LHA would be created for the whole of Buckinghamshire or whether the existing District LHAs would remain.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

89. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the following item(s) of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

90. **UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS**

The PAG received a confidential report which updated Members on the position regarding Unauthorised Encampments. Members discussed the report and recommended to the Portfolio Holder that the Council undertakes a risk assessment of sites and considers adopting Open Space new model bylaws as the next steps to be taken.

Members also requested that the Environment team be asked to explore measures that could be taken to protect Council owned land, with the prevention of car park incursions being a priority.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet the next steps to be taken regarding Unauthorised Encampments.

The meeting terminated at 7.29 pm

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 29 November 2018

Present: J Read (Chairman)
J Jordan

Apologies for absence: G Hollis, M Lewis and G Sandy

121. MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning and Economic Development PAG held on 13 September 2018 were approved.

122. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

123. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS/ SENIOR OFFICERS ON CURRENT ISSUES

Adrian Colwell had been appointed Planning Policy Manager and was a welcome addition to the team. He had extensive experience at Cherwell District Council working on the East/West Cambs/Oxon link. This experience would be useful for work being undertaken on the Iver relief road and Beaconsfield relief road.

The Chairman advised the meeting of the Economic Development team's annual event that was well attended and good feedback had been received.

124. PORTFOLIO BUDGET 2019/20

Although there had been an announcement about the formation of a new Unitary Council, there was still a requirement to set a budget for 2019/20 in the normal way. An additional provision would have to be made for the costs of transition to the new Council which would be set in February 2019, when there was more clarity about the transition process.

A potential funding gap had been identified and the Task and Finish Group had considered actions to address this. It was noted that some fees and charges were Statutory and couldn't be changed locally and so income from these was expected to stay the same.

The reasons for the increases compared to the current year's budget were discussed as outlined on page 11. With regard to the LDF in other changes, it was explained that although it looked like a £50k cost against the LDF, it was actually due to a reduction in the draw from the LDF earmarked reserves.

The key risks identified included potential income not being achieved or the cost of enforcement action being higher than expected. These costs could fluctuate. The recommendations of the task and finish group were noted and that the Local Plan had still not been completed which would help with addressing affordable housing and planning policy team requirements.

Officers were asked about the transport related costs listed in the appendix on page 16. It was advised that the previous budget had been understated and that the income from the Building Control service covered these costs.

Members asked if they would see the revised charges from April 2019/20, as these were not listed in the appendix on pages 27 to 29. It was advised that they were still being worked out and would go to Cabinet by the end of 2018. The Chairman agreed to share the charges with Members of the Committee by email when they became available.

Following consultation with the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND that Cabinet**

approve the 2019/20 revenue budgets.

125. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the following item(s) of business is not for publication to the press or public on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

126. **HS2 UPDATE REPORT**

The report sought to inform Members of the opportunities to obtain funding from the HS2 Community and Environment Fund (CEF) and the Business and Economy Fund (BLEF). It was agreed that a further report would be brought back to the PAG in March 2019.

Following consultation with the PAG the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet:

that the availability of the funds from the CEF and/or the BLEF be noted and that application to them be encouraged where appropriate.

The meeting terminated at 7.01 pm

RESOURCES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 6 December 2018

Present: B Gibbs (Chairman)
D Dhillon

Apologies for J Jordan and P Kelly
absence:

52. MINUTES

The minutes of the Resources PAG held on 25 September 2018 were approved.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

54. PORTFOLIO BUDGETS 2019/20

Members received a report which provided information on the draft revenue budget for 2019/20, and included the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year. The report further provided summary information on the budgets and highlighted issues for consideration. Detailed information was made available in the accompanying booklet.

During the discussion, the following key points were raised:

- Regardless of the decision to create a new district unitary authority in Buckinghamshire from 2020/21 this did not affect the requirement the Council had to set a legal and prudent budget for 2019/20 that addressed the Council's aims and objectives, which were set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. It would be necessary at a corporate level to make provision for the initial transition costs to the new unitary authority that would be incurred in 2019/20, this would be done when setting the final budget in February 2019 when there was more clarity around the transition process.
- The following items included in the report were highlighted to the PAG: Budget assumptions; summary revenue budgets and movements alongside the current year's budget; risks; task and finish group recommendations and opportunities and plans for improvement.
- The draft budget had been subject to a detailed review by the Portfolio Holder.
- Election costs had been included in the budget, although the likelihood was that there would be neither District nor Parish elections in 2019 following the

Modernising Local Government announcement. Members were advised that when the final PAG budget was set in February 2019, the Parliamentary Orders would have been laid and necessary amendments subsequently made to the draft budget.

- A number of insurance policies were due to be centralised during the next financial year. Fixed electricity contracts would require renewing and based on market assumptions a 6.5% increase had been factored in to the draft budget.
- The ground floor of the Capswood 1 building was expected to be let in early 2019 and as such this assumption had been included within the draft budget.

Having considered the advice of the Policy Advisory Group, the Portfolio Holder agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet to approve:

1. The 2019/20 revenue budget
2. The 2019/20 fees and charges

55. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY REPORT QUARTER 2 2018/19**

Members received a report on the Treasury Management operation of the Council for July to September 2018. The Director of Resources summarised the positions as set out in pages 41 to 44 of the reports pack.

The PAG was advised that the recent base rate increase would likely produce a modest interest rate increase in the medium term and that any variations caused by the modernising local government decision would not be significant at this time.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members noted the Treasury Management performance for Quarter 2 2018/19.

The meeting terminated at 6.16 pm