



DEMOCRATIC AND ELECTORAL SERVICES

Dealt with by: Democratic Services
Your Ref:
My Ref:
e-mail: democraticservcies@southbucks.gov.uk
Direct Line: 01895 837227
Date: 3 October 2011

Dear Councillor

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

The Environment Policy Advisory Group will be held as follows:

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 12TH OCTOBER, 2011
TIME: 6.00 PM
VENUE: ROOM 5, CAPSWOOD, OXFORD ROAD, DENHAM

Yours faithfully

Jim Burness

Director of Resources

To: Members of the Environment Policy Advisory Group

Mr Lidgate
Mr Clark
Mr Walters
Mrs Plant

Mr Bradford
Mrs Wallis
Mr Naylor
Mrs Royston

Declarations of Interest

Any Member attending the meeting is reminded of the requirement to declare if he/she has a personal interest in any item of business, as defined in the Code of Conduct. If that interest is a prejudicial interest as defined in the Code the Member should also withdraw from the meeting.

A G E N D A

1. **Apologies for absence**

2. **Minutes**

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Environment PAG held on 5 September 2011. (Pages 1 - 6)

A. REPORTS LIKELY TO LEAD TO A PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION / RECOMMENDATION

3. **Littleworth Common**

To consider report of the Director of Services. (Pages 7 - 10)

4. **Colne Valley Partnership and Groundwork Thames Valley Funding**

To consider report of the Director of Services. (Pages 11 - 18)

B. REPORTS FOR INFORMATION OR DISCUSSION

5. **Flood and Water Management Act**

To consider report of the Director of Services. (Pages 19 - 22)

6. **Waste Partnership Inter Authority Agreement (IAA)**

To receive oral update from the Director of Services.

7. **Round Review Update**

To receive report of the Director of Services. (Pages 23 - 26)

8. **Reports from Members**

To receive any reports from the Chairman or PAG Members.

9. **Any other business**

Any other business which the Portfolio Holder considers is urgent.

10. **Exempt Information**

To note the following item(s) contain exempt information, which is not for publication to the press or public.

11. **Part II Minutes**

To receive the Part II minutes of the Environment Policy Advisory Group (Pages 27 - 28) held on 5 September 2011.

(Schedule 12A part 1 para (3) - because of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person)

The next meeting of the PAG is due to take place on Thursday, 8 December 2011

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 5 September 2011

Present: Mr Lidgate (Chairman)
Mr Bradford, Mr Clark, Mrs Wallis, Mr Walters, Mr Naylor, Mrs Plant and Mrs Royston

Also Present: Mrs Woolveridge

7. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 6 June 2011 and a virtual meeting held in July 2011 were received. With reference to minute 3 [Colne Valley Park Projects 2011/12], an error was corrected by the deletion of the word "might" from line 2 of paragraph 3.

8. LITTLEWORTH COMMON MANAGEMENT PLAN 2011 - 2021

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services about the Littleworth Common Management Plan 2011 - 2021. The draft Management Plan (as appended to report) was the subject of a public consultation which involved distribution to key stakeholders, a public drop-in event for local residents and making it available for viewing and comment on the website. Also appended to the report were copies of the questionnaire issued as part of the consultation, the key stakeholder comments, a summary of comments from local residents and additional comments from a residents meeting on 31 May.

The PAG noted that there was general support for the Management Plan from key stakeholders and some minor amendments would deal with the comments made. Local residents too had expressed general support although concern had been expressed about two areas: the grazing proposal and the management of the trees around the pond. With regard to the grazing, a good deal of further investigation was required into the practicality of this suggestion, including careful investigation and assessment of other areas of where this seems to have been successful, before progress could be considered. As for trees in the vicinity of the ponds, these would need to be sensitively managed and certainly there should no removal of mature specimens.

The proposal for a Friends Group was welcomed and this would provide an opportunity for all interested local residents to be involved and give practical support to the management of the Common. The Chairman was looking to Jane Wallis and Nick Naylor as local Members to take a lead with the Friends Group after it was formed.

After discussion, the PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that the draft Management Plan should be amended as suggested in the report, to take account of concerns expressed by residents in the public consultation, and **RECOMMEND** the Cabinet to submit the final Management Plan to the Council for adoption. Officers were also asked to investigate the forming of a Friends of Littleworth Common Group with the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

9. THORNBRIDGE ROAD - PETITION

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services presenting a residents' petition raising questions about access at a parade of shops in Thornbridge Road, Iver Heath, which had been the subject of an environmental improvement scheme in 2008.

The petition sent by a disabled resident (containing 257 signatures) requested better signage and road markings so that clearer access for wheelchairs and mobility scooters could be maintained, particularly over the tactile paving adjacent to the shops.

In response to the petition, District and County Council officers met on site to review the access arrangements. As a result of the discussions the County has agreed to carry out (at its expense) the

painting of white line 'access protection markings' at either end of the parade of shops and the installation of two bollards to discourage/prevent parking.

The PAG recognised that with the limited number of parking spaces available it was unlikely that demand for parking could be fully met. The suggested works seemed to meet the concerns expressed in the petition; it was not considered appropriate to designate any parking bay as a disabled bay at present.

The PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder to accept the suggestion of the County Council to carry out a consultation about yellow line marking and a one hour parking limit.

10. BEACONSFIELD COMMON LAND - CAR PARKING

The PAG considered a report bringing together information, advice and stakeholders views on achieving a greater degree of control over the currently unregulated parking on the Common Land in Beaconsfield Old Town.

The PAG noted that further investigations had not indicated any effective means of regulating parking through existing or new byelaws for the common land. Further discussions had taken place between the Portfolio Holder, representatives of the Town Council and Hall Barn Estates at a meeting in May. It was apparent that the conflicting demands of the different users of the Common Land meant that no clear consensus among the interested parties was achievable at the present time although the matter would be kept under review especially in the light of any future developments concerning on-street decriminalised parking enforcement.

The report indicated that there was an opportunity to enhance pedestrian safety and prevent some indiscriminate parking by attending to the bollards near the Saracen's Head on the corner of London End and Windsor End, and the opposite corner of Wycombe End and Windsor End. There was a sum of £243,000 in the capital programme for the phase 2 environmental improvements (currently on hold) at Beaconsfield Old Town which could be utilised to fund the work if approved.

The PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that no further work be undertaken on Beaconsfield Common Land parking issue at present. However, the PAG also **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that:

- 1) £10k be allocated from the existing capital programme provision for the Phase 2 environmental improvements for the removal of 17 old metal posts and installation of some cast iron bollards in the vicinity of the Saracen's Head pub to enhance pedestrian safety and prevent unauthorised parking; and
- 2) Subject to further investigation, the replacement of a number of wooden posts in Windsor End with movable, lockable cast iron bollards be carried out at a potential further cost of £10k.

11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PAY AND DISPLAY CAR PARKS

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services reviewing charges for the Council's pay and display car parks.

The PAG noted that in 2010-11 the car parks had performed very well and achieved an income of £881,328 against a budget of £883,000. The 2011-12 budget had set an income target of £936,570 - a 6.1% increase. Over the first three months of the year the sale of tickets had reduced by 6% compared to the previous year and the forecast income for the year was £850,000, which if correct meant the target would be missed by £87,000. The report summarised the activity levels at each car park and a significant decline had been noted at the Gerrards Cross car parks. This coincided with the opening of the Tesco store where free parking was available. However, an increase in the use of Station Road car park was expected when the Waitrose store opened early in 2012.

With a view to increasing income in the current year and filling some of the unused spaces currently available, the PAG considered suggestions for offering discounts for season tickets at a number of car parks. It was proposed to offer discounts, for a limited period only, on the following six monthly season ticket charges:

- Jennery Lane, Burnham - £125 for 6 months (discounted from £250)

Environment Policy Advisory Group - 5 September 2011

- Neville Court, Burnham - £60 for 6 months (discounted from £90)
- Station Road, Gerrards Cross - £235 for 6 months (discounted from £470)
- The Broadway, Farnham Common - £60 for 6 months (discounted from £80)

Members felt that these discounted rates should be promoted, in particular for shop and office workers.

Turning to look at a review of the daily charges, which after consultation and lead-in time could not be implemented before April 2012, the PAG considered a number of officer suggestions aimed at meeting the proposed budget for 2012-13. There was little support for raising ticket prices by 10p across the board (+£52,000 in a full year assuming no consumer resistance). Members considered more favourably suggestions for consulting about introducing evening charges (+£20,000) and abolishing the half hour charge and having a minimum one hour charge. To mitigate the effect of this for customers, the charge for an hour at the larger car parks could be reduced from £1.30 to £1.10 and still produce an estimated increase of £95,000 in a full year. The view was expressed that there was a good case for not withdrawing the half hour charge at Burnham and Farnham Common, since the free half hour there had only been withdrawn from April 2011.

The report also gave details of two quotations from companies wishing to introduce a pay by phone system in the car parks. This would be in addition to the normal methods of payment and the best offer was from a company who had offered to do this at nil cost to the Council for a minimum of one year. The company would make its money from the charge levied on the user, believed to 20p per transaction.

After looking at a number of options for charges aimed at increasing income in 2012/13 by 2% above the 2011/12 budget, the PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder to carry out a consultation on the following possible changes from April 2012:

- 1) By extending charges for car parking from 6pm until 8pm;
- 2) By abolishing charges for half an hour and having a minimum of one hour, with the one hour charge at larger car parks to be reduced from £1.30 to £1.10; and
- 3) As for 2) above, but retaining the half hour charge at Burnham and Farnham Common at the 30p rate.

In order to promote take up of currently underused spaces in car parks and increase income in the current year, the PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that discounted season tickets, available for purchase for a period of one month from 1 December to 31 December 2011, be offered at the following car parks:

- Station Road, Gerrards Cross - £235 for 6 months
- Jennery Lane, Burnham - £125 for 6 months
- Neville Court, Burnham - £60 for 6 months
- The Broadway, Farnham Common - £60 for 6 months

Further, the PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder to allow a Company to operate a one year trial of a pay by phone scheme in the Council car parks at nil cost to the Council, subject to an agreed capped charge from the Company to the user.

12. WASTE POLICY REVIEW

The PAG received a report about a Government review of waste policy published in June 2011, and noted the potential impact on the Council and the Bucks Waste Partnership.

The PAG noted the following:

- While it was acknowledged that waste services were a matter for local authorities to develop, the Government had pledged to help councils increase the frequency and quality of rubbish collections.
- The Government is keen to increase 'recycling on the go' and will support councils working with local businesses on this.
- Funding will be available to local authorities for the development of incentive schemes to reward recycling. The Waste Partnership was likely to submit a bid for in the next round of funding.

- SBDC was leading the way on developing a countywide anti-litter campaign and this sat well with the Government's view that litter was a priority area.
- The Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) was due to end in March 2013 as landfill tax was seen as a more effective driver in reducing landfill. SBDC may need to operate commercial waste collections in future if requested.

The Portfolio Holder and PAG noted the report.

13. PLASTIC BOTTLE RECYCLING - UPDATE

The PAG was informed that the trial of collecting plastic bottles for recycling was going very well. These were collected in Beaconsfield on a Monday and Denham on a Friday. Further progress would be reported to a future meeting.

14. FUTURE WASTE SERVICES DISCUSSION REPORT

The PAG considered a comprehensive report of the Director of Services presenting the background, estimated costs and operational implications of changing refuse and recycling services in the District with a view to establishing a preferred way forward for the future.

The report set out the background on the materials recycled by the Council. For every tonne of paper, card, glass, cans, plastic bottles and foil recycled, Bucks CC paid SBDC £43.93 in recycling credits (since it did not have to go to landfill). This amounted to over £200k per year. The remaining materials were recycled under several joint contracts, the income from which varied from month to month in line with national material values.

In order for all the authorities in Bucks to move forward and meet targets and contractual arrangements, the current joint working arrangements were due to be formalised in an Inter Authority Agreement (IAA). This would set down the responsibilities of the Waste Collection Authorities (Districts) and the Waste Disposal Authority (County), agree mutual targets and aims in line with the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy towards a 60% recycling target by 2025, and financial arrangements and administration details for recycling credits and tipping away payments. The detail of the IAA was the subject of ongoing negotiations between the parties, a key part of which concerned the procurement by Bucks CC of an anaerobic digestion food waste treatment facility, to be dependent on the Districts committing to collect the food waste to 'feed' the facility.

The report also gave details of the service operated by other Districts including their future proposals. Chiltern DC's contract with Biffa was due to expire on 31 October 2012 and this was in the early stages of being re-tendered together with Wycombe DC. This may affect the joint Paper Sorting Facility contract which can terminate if two of the three parties withdraw. It could also affect the Council's contractor's use of the London Road Depot if more services are concentrated there.

The PAG recognised that there were a lot of variables which would affect the final decision as to the shape of the Council's future waste service. However the current situation where there were two different collection systems in operation needed to be resolved and a uniform collection and recycling service for all residents introduced. Whether to collect recycling source separate or co-mingled and whether food waste can be tipped in the same location as refuse were also important factors. The Part II report gave estimated costs for a number of the different options.

The PAG agreed that full and careful consultation as the Council moved forward with changes was key to its success. (This had worked well during the introduction of the trial scheme). The PAG considered that a service which could be 'sold' as the best option technically, environmentally as well as financially would be most likely to succeed.

The PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that the best all round service design for initial planning purposes would be:

- Fortnightly refuse collection from a wheelie bin
- Fortnightly recycling collection (paper, card, glass, cans and plastic bottles)
- Weekly food waste collections from a 25l "bucket"

- Chargeable garden waste collection service with a potential start date of 2014, since 2012 was likely to be unrealistic on both cost and technical grounds.

Further information was required before consideration could be given to whether co-mingled recycling collections or source separated paper and card recycling collections were preferred. The PAG also **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that there should be a full programme of public consultation leading up to the change using focus groups and further information for Members.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would await the outcome further negotiations before recommending the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement, including the SBDC share of the Avoided Disposal Savings allocations to come from Bucks CC, to Cabinet and Council for a final decision.

15. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS**

No reports were presented but the PAG noted that major changes were due to take place in the organisation of the Colne Valley Park, about which a report would be made in due course.

16. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Future Waste Services Discussion Report

(Paras 3 and 4 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person and relating to consultations/negotiations in connection with a labour relations matter)

The PAG considered a Part II report containing estimated payments that might be received if the Paper Sorting Facility closed and the estimated capital and revenue costs of each method of collecting recyclable material.

The meeting terminated at 8.25 pm

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SUBJECT:	Littleworth Common.
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to consider the options for the management works on Littleworth Common in 2011/12.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The management of Littleworth Common contributes to the Council's aim to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.

3. Background

- 3.1. Littleworth Common is significant lowland heathland of 16 Hectares/ 39.6 acres and is shown edged in black on the plan at Appendix A. This matter has previously been reported to Members and it was agreed to use previous annual budgets to undertake the following:
- Herbicide treatment of the birch and bracken
 - Scarification as necessary
 - Further tree safety works as necessary
 - Commence work to prepare a new management plan
 - Commence works to prepare a bid for Higher Level Stewardship funding from Natural England
- 3.2 The Council has prepared a new draft management plan for the years 2011 - 2021. This document has been reported to PAG together with the results of a public consultation. The bid to Natural England for Higher Level Stewardship funding will be considered in 2012.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 Recent works on the central area of the common have achieved a good amount of heather regrowth and the site is improving. This area shows what the Council is aiming at and further works are necessary to maintain this improvement throughout the central part of the site.
- 4.2 There are certain management works that should be carried out in the latter part of the financial year. These are set out below. Members are asked to approve these works.

	Task	Approx Cost £
A	To cut and treat with herbicide, the taller young birch saplings. Approx. 3 hectares. To stack all arisings in woodland.	2,000
B	To cut and treat selected rhododendron bushes. (invasive species.)	500
C	To cut fallen dead trees by holly trees. To neatly stack all arisings in woodland. (these trees were felled by others and need to be cleared to enable site access.)	300
D	To cut brambles and other encroaching vegetation from all paths around Littleworth Common	500
	Total £	3,300

Other works that have been identified in the new management plan, such as removal of selected trees at the edges of the woodland and scrub around the ponds, will be implemented in future years once the plan has been approved by Natural England. The new Friends group will be involved with some of these tasks.

Future works:

- Herbicide spraying of bracken
- Weed wiping young birch trees
- Thin out larger birch trees along edge (maybe 6-10 trees per year)
- Removal of medium size birch trees and scrub around ponds.
- Selectively thin woodland across the road, open up glades.
- Possible Scarification as necessary

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

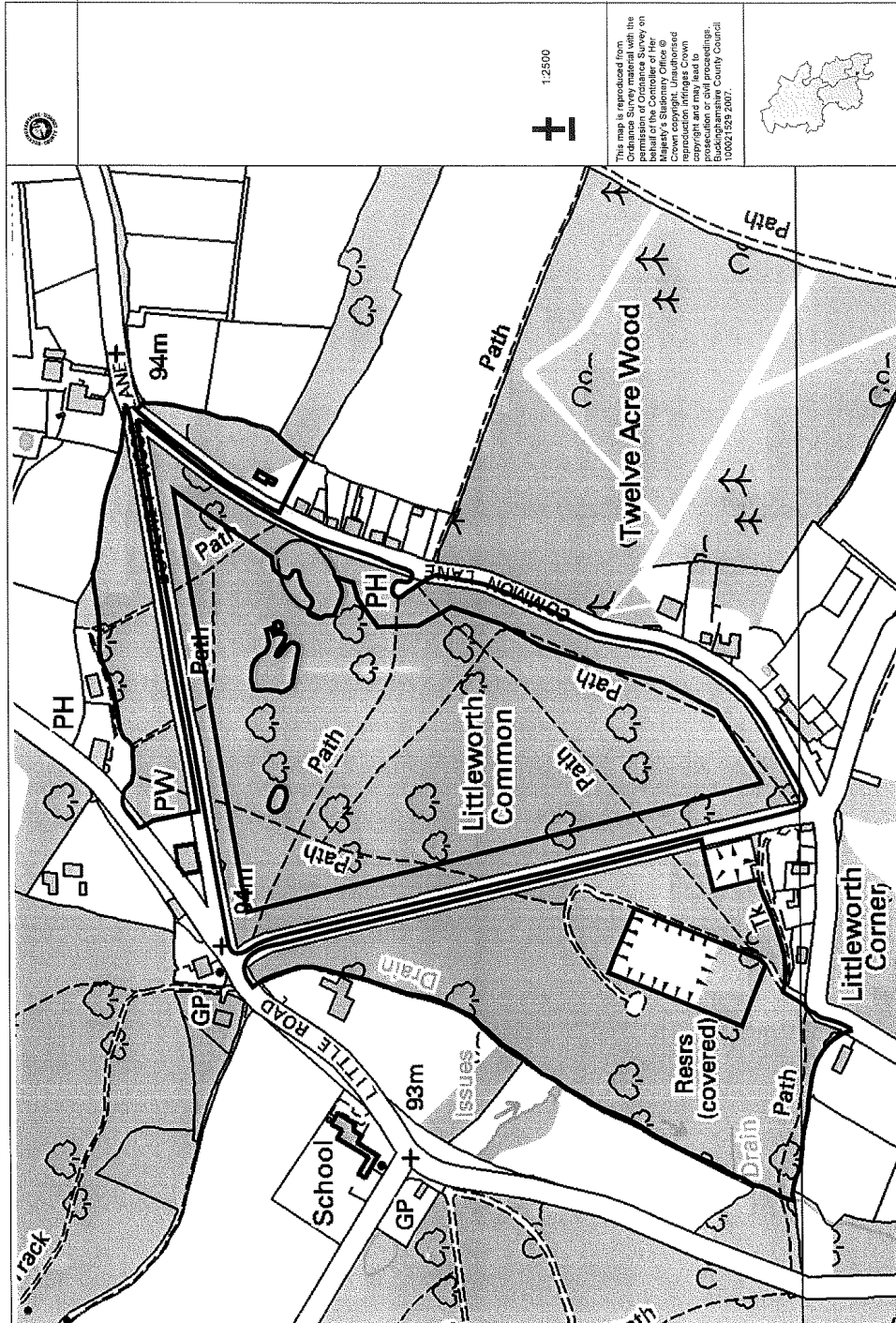
- 5.1 The works outlined in this report will be met from the 2011/12 capital budget for Littleworth Common of £9K of which £5,580 is for works.
- 5.2 There is a risk that if these management works are not carried out, the site will deteriorate and the results of previous work on the common will be lost.

6. Summary

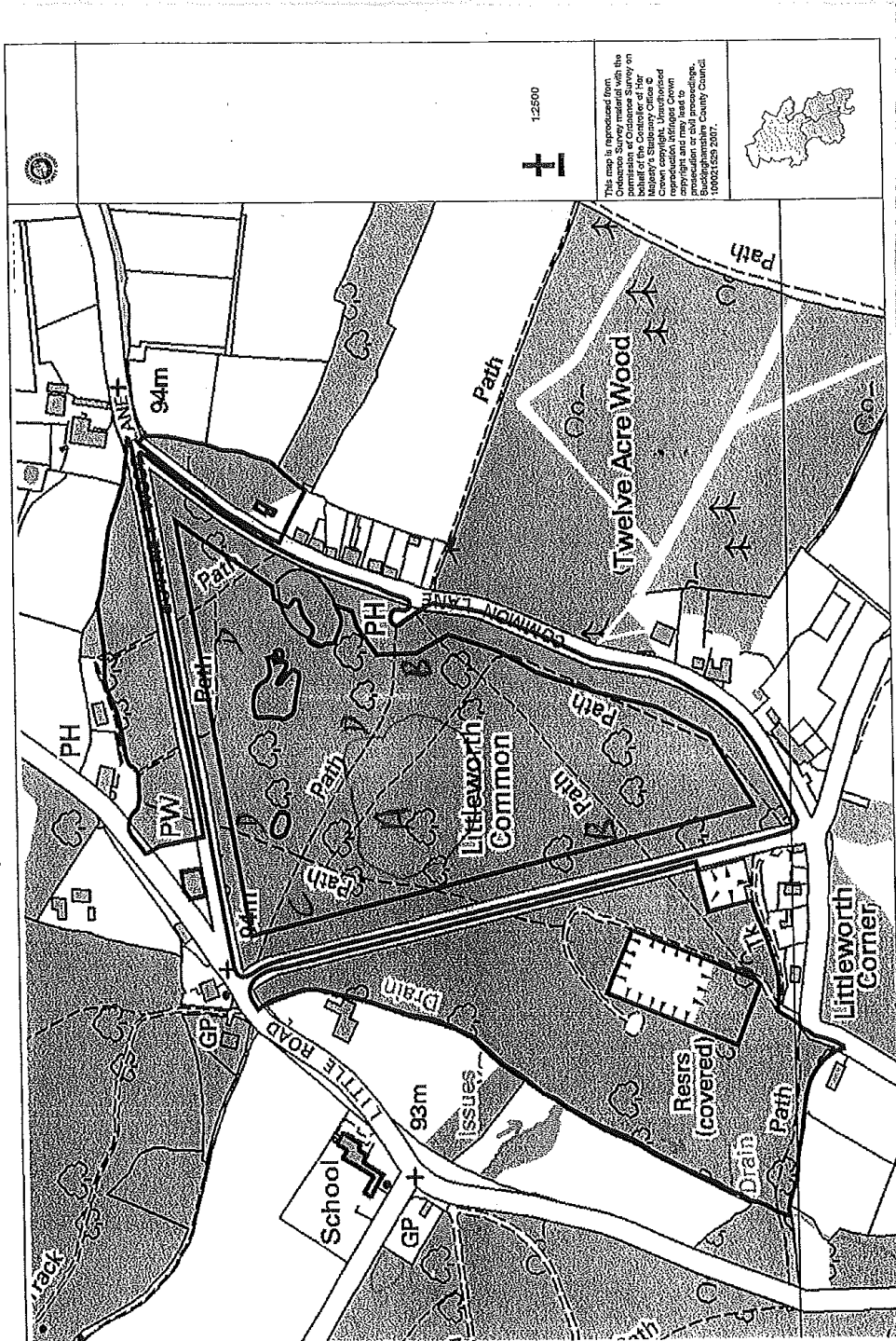
- 6.1 The Policy Advisory Group is asked to approve the works as set out in this report.

Portfolio Holder:	Councillor B Lidgate
Officer Contact:	Simon Gray 01895 837321 email simon.gray@southbucks.gov.uk
Background papers	Services working file

Appendix A. Plan of the site with the extent of the common edged in black.



Appendix B. Plan of the site with the extent of the proposed works 2011/12.



SUBJECT:	Colne Valley Partnership and Groundwork Thames Valley funding
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members about the Colne Valley Park and the Council's funding to the Colne Valley Park Partnership and Groundwork Thames Valley.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 The Partnership and Groundwork currently assist with the following Council Aims:
- ❖ Plan for a thriving and sustainable District, which protects the Green Belt and promotes appropriate development consistent with keeping the character and space for everyone to enjoy.
 - ❖ Endeavour to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.
 - ❖ Work with partners to improve the provision of and access for all to the right services, suitable housing and other amenities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Colne Valley Regional Park (CVRP) was established in 1965. It covers an area of 43 square miles covering parts of 10 local authorities. It provides the first significant area of countryside to the west of London and is regionally important for recreation and internationally important for wildlife. Large areas are open to the public and accessible through a network of paths. The Park provides an area of great natural beauty around the south western boundary of London.
- 3.2 South Bucks is one of the major beneficiaries of the Colne Valley Park (CVP) - 41% of the CVP is located within South Bucks (the largest part of the Colne Valley), the vast majority of CVP projects are undertaken in South Bucks District.
- 3.3 32% of South Bucks is within the CVP (the largest percentage of all the local authorities) - this is the part of the district closest to the urban edge and the greenbelt here is most under threat from dereliction, decline of agriculture and development.
- 3.4 The Key Aims of the CVP are:
1. To maintain and enhance the landscape, historic environment and waterscape of the Park in terms of their scenic and conservation value and their overall amenity.
 2. To resist urbanisation of the Colne Valley Park and to safeguard existing areas of countryside from inappropriate development.
 3. To conserve the biodiversity resources of the Park through the protection and management of its diverse plant and animal species, habitats and geological features.
 4. To provide opportunities for countryside recreation including appropriate accessible facilities.

5. To achieve a vibrant and sustainable rural economy, including farming and forestry, underpinning the value of the countryside.

- 3.5 South Bucks DC has been a member of the Colne Valley Partnership throughout its history. The Council contributes an annual Levy towards the Partnership which stands at £4,838 at 2011/12 figures. The total annual levy from all the partners is approximately £44,000.
- 3.6 Other partners to the Partnership are local authorities whose boundaries cross the Regional Park. The contributions are based on a formula which takes into account the area that each LA has in the CVP and the population within a certain distance of the Park which might be expected to visit it. The continuance of core funding through the Colne Valley Levy is important if opportunities to deliver projects in the Colne Valley Park are to be continually realised.
- 3.7 The Colne Valley Partnership levy contributes towards the running of the CVRP, marketing and publicity, and the Colne Valley Park Visitor Centre in Denham. The CVP has an agreement with GTV for it to undertake works on its behalf, including running the CVP centre.
- 3.8 Groundwork Thames Valley was founded in 1988. Groundwork is the main body for developing and implementing Colne Valley projects. Groundwork employs several staff to work on Colne Valley projects such as Landscape Architecture, Community Development, Education and Marketing.
- 3.9 South Bucks District Council has been providing core funding since 1988 which helps to meet the costs of the above. South Bucks DC has also been providing project funding for annual improvement projects within the Colne Valley Park since 1992. The South Bucks projects contribute to the Colne Valley Regional Park Action Plan (currently 2009 - 12) and Annual Review.
- 3.10 The amounts concerned (at 11/12 figures) are as set out below:
- | | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Groundwork Core Funding | £7,470 |
| Groundwork Project funding | £8,450 |
- 3.11 The core funding is paid towards the general service that Groundwork provides. This contributes to running costs and enables project staff to develop new projects and investigate funding sources. This is then matched by government funding via Groundwork UK. Core funding from SBDC is also multiplied many times by the amount of project funding brought into the district by Groundwork. Without Core Funding Groundwork resources would be reduced and it would be unlikely to be able to develop projects for the District Council or seek other funding towards them.
- 3.12 The project funding is used to fund the implementation of environmental improvement projects themselves. As a charity, Groundwork also brings in match funding for projects which is not normally available to Local Authorities. In total Groundwork brings in external funding to deliver approx. £400,000 of projects/year, although not all of this is in South Bucks. Throughout the implementation of the last action plan from 2006 - 09, £1.25 million worth of projects were delivered within the Colne Valley Park, a ten-fold increase on the Levy from the Local Authority members of the Partnership.

- 3.13 At a meeting of the Environment PAG in October 2010, the Portfolio Holder agreed to continue funding for 2011/12 and to look further at the potential to use the Capital Community Development Grant for 2012/13 onwards for projects and also to discuss further with the Colne Valley Park (CVP) and Groundwork Thames Valley (GTV) the potential for future efficiencies and reduction in future contributions.

“After considering all the information available the PAG agreed to advise the Portfolio Holder to continue funding for 2011/12 and to look further at the potential to use the Capital Community Development Grant fund for 2012/13 onwards for projects and also to discuss further with CVP/GWT the potential for future efficiencies and reduction in future contributions.”

4. Proposal/Discussion

Colne Valley Park Partnership Core funding

- 4.1 Following discussions with the CVP it is clear that they are experiencing financial pressures, with some authorities ceasing to provide core funding. Accordingly, the CVP is exploring a wide ranging change in its modus operandi with the possibility of becoming either a Charity or a Community Interest Company; operating in a much more entrepreneurial way and opening itself up to encourage the private sector to play a role in it, particularly to offset the reducing income from Local Authorities. Accordingly it is looking at a number of matters as part of this, including a change to the Aims of the Partnership and measures to make it ‘fit for purpose’ and sustainable in the light of changing circumstances being faced by the Partners. These proposed changes will be discussed at a meeting of the Colne Valley Partnership in October 2011 and a provisional new structure agreed in December 2011.
- 4.2 Members have previously shown support for the CVP core funding. SBDC, with much of its district within the CVP, receives the most benefit from the CVP and stands to lose the most should funding be reduced. Currently, the CVP core funding for 2012/13 and beyond has been identified as a saving to the Council. (SBDC Cabinet on 8th February 2011.) Members are asked to reconsider this and advise whether the core funding should in fact be cut, or whether the contribution should be maintained at current levels, with a slight increase for inflation, for the next three years.

The current Colne Valley Park Core Funding is £4,838

- 4.3 Alternatively, Members may wish to re-phase the proposed cut to 2013/14 and thus allow the new charity/community interest company to be set up in the interim. Also, Members might like to consider pump priming any new charity with a one off capital payment in lieu of further revenue payments, say a one off payment of £40,000. This £40K one off sum should only be offered if and when the Charity/Community Interest Company is set up, rather than if the CV Partnership continued to operate in its current form. The reasoning for this is that if the CVP partnership continued in its current form, it is possible that other Local Authorities may withdraw funding to the extent that the CVP Partnership would have to be wound up, and in such circumstances the £40K would have no long term benefit.

- 4.4 In addition, the CVP has requested that its member authorities explore the following:

To establish whether there is any potential for increasing Park owned/controlled income-generating assets. At present, the only income that is derived in this way is the surplus generated by Groundwork (assisted by the Friends of the CVP) from the Colne Valley Park visitor centre - circa £8.5k anticipated in 2011/12. It has asked Local Authorities to undertake an assessment of the assets and/or income derived from them (in terms of land, property, facilities (including car parks and agricultural estate), which it would be prepared to either:-

- Gift sites to the new Park organization (potentially in lieu of future financial contributions - i.e. the Levy funding that the Council pays to the Partnership each year.)
- As above, giving the new organization 'first refusal' on the potential to purchase.
- It has identified the most obvious ones for LAs to look at as being:-
 - Car Park charges (at least share) - on the basis that without the park activities, the income wouldn't be generated (this refers mainly to income from BCC car parks at the Country Parks);
 - Via its own developments (e.g. green energy, profit share with farmers on re-use of redundant buildings for park-related uses, wind turbine, 'green' conferencing, woodland burials, wood fuel and other wood products?)
 - Via direct service provision for visitors (e.g. cycle hire, camping, catering, garden products).

Direct service provision. To consider what service provision that is or could be out-sourced from LAs which the Park organisation be at least able to tender for. It has identified matters such as landscape / green space management contracts, facilities management (including, potentially, country parks), Rights-of-Way.

- 4.5 These matters have been considered but the District Council cannot offer anything at this time.

Groundwork Thames Valley Core Funding

- 4.6 The Council has supported Groundwork Thames Valley in recent years with an annual grant to assist with its core funding requirements.

This grant was £7,470 at 2011/12 figures

- 4.7 As above, Members have previously shown support for the Groundwork core funding which helps support many of the activities within the Colne Valley Park. Currently, the GTV core funding for 2012/13 and beyond has been identified as a saving to the Council. (Cabinet on 8th February 2011.) Members are asked to consider this and advise whether the core funding should in fact be cut, or whether the contribution should be maintained at current levels, with a slight increase for inflation, for the next three years.

Groundwork Thames Valley Project Funding

- 4.8 The Council has supported Groundwork Thames Valley in recent years with an annual payment to facilitate capital improvements to sites within South Bucks.

This grant was £8,450 in 2011/12.

Members previously agreed to look further at the potential to use the Capital Community Development Grant fund for 2012/13 onwards for projects.

- 4.9 There will be a saving of £8,450 as the Groundwork Project funding will cease. Currently, the Capital Community Development Grant has £15k per annum from 2012/13, although this may change in future years. Following Members' previous discussions, GTV will apply to this fund for future capital works on a project basis, which will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 4.10 Members are also asked to consider the funding for these projects in future years, and at what level, should the Capital Community Development Grant cease to exist. Savings would have to be made elsewhere in the Capital Budgets should further funding be required.
- 4.11 Members are asked to reconsider the withdrawal from the Core Funding to both the CVP and GTV and to consider the funding of Colne Valley environmental improvement projects through the Capital Community Development Grant or alternatives.

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

- 5.1 The financial contributions to the Colne Valley Park Partnership and Groundwork Thames Valley for 2011/12 are provided for in current budgets. Members are asked to discuss these contributions for 2012/13 onwards.

5.2 Risks.

Should the funding be withdrawn, there are several risks. These are shown in Appendix A.

6. Summary

- 6.1 The Policy Advisory Group is asked to advise the Portfolio Holder with regard to:
- The continuing annual financial support to the Colne Valley Park Partnership and Groundwork Thames Valley, from 2012/13 for three years.
 - The use of future years' Capital Community Development Grant budget for future capital works, or alternative arrangements.

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Background Papers:	None

Appendix A. Risks associated with withdrawing funding from the Colne Valley Partnership.

- Central government funding is only available to match local contributions, therefore any cut by South Bucks District Council is multiplied by two as match funding may also be lost.
- There is the potential for a 'house of cards' effect, where reductions in funding by one local authority triggers reductions by the other local authorities.
- Many forms of grant funding will not cover the costs of preparing and submitting applications for project funding. Without core funding, the CVP and Groundwork's ability to secure additional project funding to spend in the District would be greatly reduced.
- Groundwork provides a number of support services for the Colne Valley Regional Park. The presence of the Colne Valley has provided extra protection for the most vulnerable part of the District and enabled funding to be secured. A cut in funding would greatly weaken Groundwork's ability to perform its roles and so weaken the Regional Park.
- Groundwork supports the activities of many local groups and organisations within South Bucks and the capacity to do this would be reduced. Initiatives such as the Friends of the Colne Valley, Rural Development Forum, Farming in the rural urban fringe, Local Food to Local Markets, Woodland management, links between local people and the countryside on their doorstep, Tourism & day visits might suffer. Local residents spent 1,337 volunteer days working in the Colne Valley Park during 2009/10 which shows that the Councils contribution generates a valuable return.
- A funding reduction will severely impact on Groundwork's ability to develop and deliver community projects within South Bucks. In addition to the Colne Valley Park team this will also affect Groundwork's other teams and subsidiary companies that operate within South Bucks - Blue Sky, Iver Nature Study Centre, Learning services, West London Floating Classroom.
- Many other sources of funding cannot be accessed without local match funding. Colne Valley project funds from SBDC are used as match to pull in additional funding from landfill tax, private companies and other grant sources. These sources of funding might dry up without SBDC funding. Nearly £275k worth of projects in the South Bucks/Colne Valley geographical crossover was undertaken in 2009/10 (a 13-fold return on the £20,663 total investment from SBDC). A reduction in any one of the three budgets will severely impact on the ability to generate this return in future.
- The Colne Valley Regional Park can play a significant role in helping SBDC implement many of the core policies contained in the Core Strategy, including the following:
 - Core policy 9 - Natural environment
 - Core policy 16 - South of Iver development site (opportunity area)
- Green Belt policy says 'no' to development and has been very successful in maintaining open land but green belt policies alone do not assist with finding positive uses for land or maintain landscape quality. The Colne Valley Park complements the successes of green belt policy by saying 'yes' to high quality landscapes, biodiversity, recreation and farming and forestry.
- The Colne Valley Park also ties together the urban fringe in South Bucks together with the urban fringe in neighbouring Hillingdon, Chiltern, Three Rivers and Slough. The green belt /urban fringe is now under significant development pressure from development (eg HS2 and associated infrastructure, Project Pinewood). Now is the worst time to withdraw funding and expect Groundwork to tackle these challenges (and opportunities) alone.
- The CVP encourages other partners to join the Partnership, to bring benefits to the South Bucks area. The Partnership has recently recruited the Chiltern Society to contribute to the Levy. On behalf of the partnership, Groundwork is discussing this with other potential partners including the GLA and BAA.

- Additional implications of a withdrawal by SBDC are likely to include the closure of the CVP Visitor Centre and toilets as it will be difficult to justify using funding from other local authorities to pay for a building in South Bucks if that local authority is no longer contributing. This would leave the Partnership without a central base to operate from and to recruit volunteers from.
- There is a risk that senior management of Groundwork will shift focus to other local authorities that are contributing to core funding. This will mean that large projects such as the £200k Rural Development Forum and the £1.7M Lottery Landscapes Partnership bid will be much less likely to be developed in future.

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SUBJECT:	Flood and Water Management Act
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update of the progress being made by the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Group.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 Working with partners across Bucks will help us to achieve the Council's aim to make our environment measurably cleaner, healthier and managed in a way to preserve it for future generations.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Flood and Water Management Act was introduced in April 2010 following the report by Sir Michael Pitt. The Act establishes the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority, while District Councils retain responsibility for managing local ground water flooding incidents and the role in ensuring that ordinary watercourses are kept clear and flowing.
- 3.3 Funding is allocated to the lead flood authority in order to develop a countywide flood plan and to ensure that all available information and good practice is gathered and shared across the districts.
- 3.4 The lead local flood authority is responsible for developing and maintaining a strategy for local flood risk management in its area to include:
- Surface run off
 - Groundwater
 - Ordinary Watercourses
- 3.5 All authorities are required to co-operate with other relevant authorities in the exercise of their flood and coastal erosion risk management, for Buckinghamshire this is achieved via a Strategic Flood Management Group (SFMG) which includes representatives of each local authority and the relevant regulators.
- 3.6 As one of the first tasks for the SFMG, a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PRFA) has been developed and was approved by Bucks County Council on 8th July 2011.

4. Proposal/Discussion

- 4.1 A report was presented to Bucks County Council's Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation on 8th July 2011 recommending the approval of the PFRA
- 4.2 The PFRA report is an assessment of past and potential future flooding events across Buckinghamshire looking at local sources of flood risk, primarily from surface runoff caused by intense rainfall, high groundwater levels and out-of-bank flows from ordinary watercourses. It maps past and possible future floods and

high level indications of possible consequences and is used to inform where the risk of flooding has been significant, and could be again in the future.

- 4.3 The report brings together a variety of existing resources and making them accessible in order to help to identify the risk of potential flooding in the future. The majority of incidents in South Bucks relate to areas of historic road and land flooding and are outlined in tables B6 to B11 attached to the PFRA report. These tables are supported by a GIS based mapping system which will ultimately link with both the County's transportation maps and our own mapping system.
- 4.4 The County Council have consulted relevant authorities through the Local Area Forums and via Local Members. Relevant views have been taken into account and were included in the final report as appropriate.
- 4.5 A copy of the full PFRA report as approved and submitted to The Environment Agency has been placed in the Members' Room.
- 4.6 This is the first step in developing a Local Flood Risk Strategy, which will set out how local flood risk will be managed across Buckinghamshire. In addition to the PFRA, Surface Water Management Plans are being prepared for the highest risk areas in High Wycombe and Chesham.
- 4.7 Given the potential additional publicity surrounding flooding as a result of the PFRA, there is a potential for an increased expectation of action by the authority in relation to riparian owned ditches. The Council has agreed previously that we would try to encourage the relevant riparian owners to carry out maintenance to watercourses as required rather than enforcing notices by carrying out works in default and attempting to recover expenditure.
- 4.8 As part of the continuing work of the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Group specific projects are in hand to address resourcing issues across authorities, eg. The assessment of applications for sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS). Aylesbury and Wycombe Councils have established processes in place while resources at South Bucks are limited.
- 4.9 As part of their role as a lead flood authority Bucks County now have similar powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to those available to South Bucks under the Land Drainage Act. As a result there is an expectation that there will be a need for consistency in which the powers are exercised across authorities in Buckinghamshire. Members may wish to note that should there be a significant change in the approach to enforcement we would need to consider making resources available for enforcement work.

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

- 5.1 The risks associated with this matter are around the Council's ability to respond to an emergency flooding situation. The Civil Contingencies Act places a duty on the authority to have contingency plans in the event of an emergency including responsibility for local flood risk management.
- 5.2 The PFRA report raises the profile of potential flooding and may in turn lead to a greater anticipation that both county and district councils will act to mitigate in all flood prone areas. Should there be a need for more intrusive intervention relating to the enforcement of to watercourses this will obviously have unmet resource implications.

- 5.3 The production of this report and submission to Environment Agency meets the statutory duty for each authority under the Flood and Water Management Act.
- 5.4 The flood risk maps identify areas which are at risk of flooding and therefore could have potential impact on insurance and property values.

6. Summary

- 6.1 Members are asked to consider the informal approach to enforcement relating to watercourses and advise the portfolio holder whether they consider that there is a need to reconsider our approach to enforcement to a more intrusive intervention bearing in mind there will be resource implications.
- 6.2 This report is to bring the PFRA for Buckinghamshire to the attention of Members of the Policy Advisory Group, which is asked to note its contents.

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Background Papers:	PFRA Report

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SUBJECT:	Round Review Update
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress of the round review conducted by officers.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This matter is related to the following local and national policy objectives:

- The Council's medium-term aim of helping to provide a clean and decent district where there is pride in, and ownership of, our surroundings and public spaces.
- Waste Strategy for Buckinghamshire recycling targets of 45% by 2010/11 and 60% by 2025.

3. Background.

- 3.1 Since February 2011 officers have been conducting a review of the main waste and recycling collection rounds. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Council offer a consistent and efficient service throughout the district and that refuse is collected safely.
- 3.2 During the course of several months SBDC officers (staff members from the Environment Team) accompanied crews during their refuse and recycling collection rounds. Every round was observed and issues such as incorrect presentation of waste or health and safety concerns were recorded on a designated spreadsheet.
- 3.3 Where possible letters were delivered immediately. Otherwise letters were sent to residents regarding any issues that required addressing. A summary of the numbers and issues dealt with is provided in the discussion below.

4. Discussion.

- 4.1 Table 1: Summary of Issues and number of properties contacted

Letter	Number Sent	Number of Boxes Delivered
Property Boundary	198	
Non SBDC Recycling Containers	598	450
Non SBDC Wheelie Bins	106	
Wheelie Bins on Black Sack Round	89	
Excess Waste	88	
General Etiquette	124	
Property not recycling leaflet	>1000	
Total	2203	

4.2 Property Boundary

A key area of concern that arose from the review involved property boundary issues; this was where residents were NOT presenting refuse and recycling at their property boundary. 198 properties were sent a letter informing them that refuse and recycling was not presented at the boundary (by a date specified) would not be collected.

Where the issues are more complicated, for example where whole streets were not presenting at the boundary, crew members were going up stairs or the refuse/recycling vehicle was having to reverse long distances down narrow/private driveways, Officers are tackling properties individually and revisiting with either another officer or with a Biffa supervisor. This is to review the situation and to find the most appropriate place to indicate a collection point to the resident. There are currently circa 230 properties and 90 roads that require further investigation.

4.3 Non SBDC Containers

Another key area of concern was the number of properties using non SBDC containers either for refuse or recycling. Those using a private wheelie bin received a letter explain that we were unable to guarantee the collection of refuse from private containers.

Where properties presented non SBDC recycling boxes new boxes were left with a letter; over 450 boxes were distributed by Officers.

4.4 Excess Waste/Contamination

Letters were delivered to those properties presenting excess waste or contaminated green bins.

4.5 General Etiquette

During inspections it became apparent to Officers that some properties were presenting waste that was dangerous, offensive or dangerously heavy. Therefore a letter regarding general etiquette was produced and generally delivered straight away.

4.6 No Recycling

Where properties had not presented recycling for collection they were left an information flyer promoting recycling services. This resulted in further recycling boxes being ordered.

In addition a number of flats were identified where no recycling provision was in place or boxes were being used with limited success. The table below indicates where mini recycling centres have been installed so far as a result of this project. There are still a few more sites to be completed.

Address (Flats)	Number of Properties
Coalmans Way	28
Pinehurst Court	14
Parkgate	20
Ye Meads	6
Oxford Road	4
Keensacre	40
Total:	112

4.7 Bulk Refuse Bins

The round review also included the bulk collection round and made a note of all properties that were not using bins hired through SBDC. These properties are being contacted and advised of the hire costs and advantages of hiring from SBDC. As a result nineteen 1100L refuse bins have been distributed to date and are hired at a rate of £158.70 per year. This project is ongoing.

4.8 General

The round review raised concerns regarding the consistency and efficiency of the collection rounds and highlighted areas where efficiencies could be made. As a result some roads have been moved to different collection rounds.

It also highlighted that enforcement notes provided to the crews were not always being used on a day to day basis. The importance of this procedure has been stressed to collection crews.

On the whole the review has been a positive experience for Officers and Biffa Operatives. The former feel that they now know the service better, are more aware of what information needs to be given to residents and are more appreciative of the benefits of a safe and efficient service; and the latter were happy to be listened to and actively involved in making service improvements.

Similarly, it is felt that the review has also been of benefit to residents. A number of resident's broken recycling boxes were replaced when Officers were shadowing the recycling vehicles without us being asked to do this. Receiving advice on other matters such as items we can't collect and collection points has also provided clarity and reduced the risk of collections being missed for these reasons.

5. Resource and Wider Policy Implications.

5.1 The round review has had an impact on the capital budget. At least 450 boxes costing £1,611 and 20 wheelie bins in mini recycling centres costing approximately £500 have been purchased. The 19 x 1100L bins cost £4,468.80, although these will bring in an income of £3,015.30 per year.

5.2 The inefficiencies in rounds that have been highlighted should be borne in mind when considering future changes to collection services. Round optimization and restructuring may have to be investigated while planning future changes to the service.

6. Summary.

6.1 Environment PAG Members are asked to note the content of this report.

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Background Papers:	Services working file

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