

## ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

### Meeting - 12 October 2011

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

Also Present: Mrs Woolveridge

Apologies for absence: Mr Bradford and Mr Naylor

#### 18. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 5 September 2011 were received.

With reference to minute 11 [Annual Review of Pay and display Car Parks], the PAG noted that following the meeting the Portfolio Holder had agreed to advance the purchasing 'window' for discounted season tickets to November 2011 (instead of December 2011).

#### 19. LITTLEWORTH COMMON

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services with proposals for management works to be carried out on Littleworth Common during 2011/12.

The PAG noted that recent works on the central area of the Common had achieved a good amount of heather re-growth and the site was improving. Further works were necessary to maintain the improvement and the report put forward a schedule of work to cut back and treat some of the vegetation growth as follows:

- Cut and treat with herbicide the taller young birch saplings over approximately 3 hectares. To stack all arisings in woodland. Estimated cost £2,000
- Cut and treat selected rhododendron bushes (invasive species). Estimated cost £500
- Cut fallen dead trees by holly trees. To stack neatly all arisings in woodland (these trees were felled by others and need to be cleared to enable site access). Estimated £300
- Cut brambles and other encroaching vegetation from all paths around Littleworth Common. Estimated cost £500

The total estimated cost of the works was £3,300 which could be met from the 2011/12 capital budget for Littleworth Common of £9k (of which £5,580 is for works).

Other works had been identified in the new Management Plan, such as removal of selected trees at the edges of the woodland and scrub around the ponds, and it was proposed that these be carried out in future years after final approval of the Plan. The new Friends Group would be involved with some of these tasks.

The PAG **AGREED** to advise the Portfolio Holder that £3,300 from the capital budget for Littleworth Common be spent on the proposed cutting and clearing works.

#### 20. COLNE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP AND GROUNDWORK THAMES VALLEY FUNDING

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services about the Colne Valley Park and the Council's funding to the Colne Valley Park Partnership (CVP) and Groundwork Thames Valley (GTV).

South Bucks had supported the CVP for many years and had contributed to the annual levy for the Partnership - £4,838 in 2011/12 towards a total of £44,000. The CVP had an agreement with Groundwork Thames Valley to undertake works on its behalf. South Bucks also contributed to GTV - core funding of £7,470 and project funding of £8,450 in the current year.

CVP was experiencing financial pressures with some authorities ceasing to provide core funding. Discussions had taken place with the Partnership about the basis of future funding for it and the core funding and project support for GTV in the light of the previous decision of the Council to make a revenue saving of £12,308 in the 2012/13 draft budget by deletion of the core funding provision for both CVP and GTV. CVP had looked at options for operating in a more entrepreneurial way and encouraging the private sector to play a more active role in it. It was proposed to set up as a Community Interest Company which should, with better marketing, allow itself to attract a greater level of financial support from the private sector.

It was recognised that while South Bucks was not a large contributor financially, with 32% of the Park in South Bucks it was substantial beneficiary from the activities of CVP. It had been proposed that in lieu of further revenue payments, the Council should consider a one-off capital payment to the Community Interest Company if it was successfully formed. There was a lot of further work to be done on the detail of forming the Company, including issues of timing and support during the interim period, and the Council would need to investigate further the capital funding proposed.

The PAG **AGREED** however to advise the Portfolio Holder to **RECOMMEND** the Cabinet to make a one-off capital payment of £40,000 to CVP as a pump priming payment for the proposed Community Interest Company being set up, subject to agreement on terms and conditions and further discussions with GTV about future funding. While these discussions are taking place, the core funding continue to be provided in 2012/13 revenue budgets.

## 21. FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT

The PAG considered a report of the Director of Services containing an update of the progress made by the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Group.

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 had established the County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority, while District Councils retained responsibility for managing local ground water flooding incidents and the role of ensuring that ordinary watercourses were kept clear and flowing. All authorities were required to work together in the exercise of flood risk management and in Buckinghamshire this was achieved through the Strategic Flood Management Group. The Group had produced a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) 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, and included indications of the possible consequences of future incidents where the flood risk was significant.

A full copy of the PRFA, as approved and submitted to the Environment Agency, had been placed in the Members Room. The PAG noted that given the higher profile of flooding as a result of the PRFA and floods across the country in recent years, there was a potential increased expectation on councils to act to mitigate risk in all flood prone areas. The District Council's approach to local issues has been to encourage the relevant riparian owners to carry out maintenance to watercourses as required rather than by enforcing notices by carrying out works in default and attempting to recover expenditure. Members received answers to a number of questions in relation to local flooding incidents.

The Portfolio Holder and PAG noted the report and confirmed that the Council should continue its informal approach to enforcement relating to watercourses.

## 22. WASTE PARTNERSHIP INTER AUTHORITY AGREEMENT (IAA)

The PAG was informed of the continuing joint authority discussions on the calculation of a fair distribution of the future savings that Bucks County Council would make from a reduction in waste going to landfill, for re-investment in improved waste collection and recycling schemes by the District Councils. This was against a background of achieving a 60% recycling target by 2025. At the same time the County Council was also endeavouring to reach agreement on its 'Energy for Waste' contract which could affect the potential sum available for distribution. Until these matters were resolved, a report could not be brought to the Council for approval of the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement.

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It was also reported that there was a possibility that an application for grant towards the cost of District waste collections could be made for the £250m made available, as announced by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

### 23. ROUND REVIEW UPDATE

The received a report of the Director of Services on the progress of the round review conducted by the officers.

Since February 2011 officers had been carrying out a review of the main waste and recycling collection rounds with a view to ensuring that a consistent and efficient service was offered throughout the District, and that collections were safe. Issues dealt with included the incorrect presentation of waste or recycling by residents (either not at the property boundary or in an inappropriate container), excess or contaminated waste, wheelie bin/black sack problems, and other general matters. Where appropriate, letters had been delivered to residents seeking their co-operation or a change in behaviour to accord with the normal waste and recycling collection procedures.

As a result of the review over 450 recycling boxes (costing £1,611) and 20 wheelie bins in mini recycling centres (costing £500) had been purchased and distributed. Also 19 bulk refuse bins had been purchased (costing £4,469) although these were expected to recoup about £3,000 in hire charges. Also, further discussions were due to take place with Development Management officers about the positioning of bin stores in new developments with a view to ensuring adequate means of access to enable efficient collections.

The Portfolio Holder and PAG noted the report.

### 24. OTHER BUSINESS - FOOD WASTE CONTAINERS

PAG members were invited to take a food waste container (including kitchen caddie) from the selection available, to participate in a trial for waste food collection. Feedback was invited on the adequacy of the container, ease of use, etc.

### 25. PART II MINUTES

The Part II minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held on 5 September 2011 were received.

The meeting terminated at 7.40 pm