

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 4 December 2013

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

Apologies for absence: Mr Clark, Miss Hazell and Mrs Plant

22. MINUTES

The Part I and Part II minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 4 September 2013 were received.

23. PORTFOLIO HOLDER BUDGETS 2014/2015

The PAG considered a report seeking approval to the draft revenue budget and fees and charges schedule for 2014/15 for the Environment Portfolio. The PAG noted that the Search Fee for Land Charges of £95 under 2013/14 also applied to 2014/15

A separate Appendix in Part 2 set out a number of saving options and during the discussion a number of members expressed concern on the proposal to reduce the level of street cleaning following a publicity campaign to reduce littering. The Council had a good record of street cleanliness and achieving a reduction in service level without having an adverse impact on this record would depend on the publicity campaign the success of which would not necessarily be immediate, mindful that a change in people's behaviour was required.

With regard to the details of the publicity campaign the PAG was informed that the intention was for this to be County-wide under the aegis of the Joint Waste Committee for Buckinghamshire which was due to receive details at its meeting in January 2014.

The PAG, after asking to be kept informed of the publicity campaign, received an assurance that implementation of the proposal to reduce the level of street cleaning in 2015/16 would be closely monitored following the publicity campaign.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder has **APPROVED** for submission to the Cabinet:

- 1) The 2014/15 revenue budget of £1,836k
- 2) The 2014/15 fees and charges

24. CAR PARKING CHARGES

The PAG considered a report setting out the results of the consultation that had been recently undertaken in relation to proposed charges at the Council's pay and display car parks for 2014/15.

The car park income for 2013/14 was predicted to total £876,000 against a budget of £916,000 resulting in a shortfall of £40,000. With the draft budget for 2014/15 having been set at £934,300 the level of income would need to increase by £58,320 and the proposed 2% increase in charges were estimated to generate additional income of £65,500.

Whilst regretting the need to increase the charges the PAG noted that there had been no increases in most charges for the past 5 years. Following a suggestion made by a member the Portfolio Holder assured the meeting that he would continue to stress the need for Bucks County Council to increase on street parking enforcement thereby encouraging greater use of off street car parks.

Having considered the comments of the PAG the Portfolio Holder has **AGREED** to

RECOMMEND to Cabinet that the proposed increases in charges and season tickets at the Council's pay and display car parks for 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix A of the report be agreed and implemented.

25. LITTLEWORTH COMMON SSSI UPDATE

The PAG received a report providing an update on the Higher Level Stewardship funding application that had been submitted to Natural England (NE) in respect of Littleworth Common which the Council manages but does not own.

Following an internal review of their funding mechanisms and criteria there was now a requirement for the owners of the site to countersign the application and the PAG was disappointed to note that notwithstanding attempts to contact the owners the required countersignature had not been obtained resulting in NE rejecting the application.

The PAG, after noting that the next funding stream was not likely to be available until 2014/15, supported the proposal to write to NE to indicate the Council's surprise and disappointment at their decision with a copy to Dominic Grieve MP seeking his assistance to secure funding from NE.

26. UPDATE ON NEW WASTE SERVICE ROLL OUT

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

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

The PAG sought further information on the number of households that:

- have not been provided with a wheelie bin
- had signed up for a smaller bin
- had signed up for the garden waste service

Following a suggestion the PAG felt there was some merit in exploring the feasibility of providing a fee based cleaning service for the bins.

In response to a question the PAG was assured that the extra administrative staff recruited would be sufficient to deal with the additional work involved in the roll out. Members of the PAG agreed that all Councillors had a part to play in the roll out in terms of explaining the changes and in encouraging residents to change their behaviour.

The meeting terminated at 7.14 pm