

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 19 March 2014

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

Also Present: Mr Smith

Apologies for absence: Mr Clark

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 4 December 2013 were received.

28. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

29. CAR PARKING SURVEY RESULTS

The PAG received a report and a presentation from Yes Engineering on the results of the survey of car parking capacity for Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross. The PAG were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on whether to recommend to Cabinet that a design study should now be carried out with a view to providing further off street car park spaces in the District.

In November 2013, the Cabinet agreed in principle that a study should be carried out at an estimated cost of £25,000 to design possible solutions by expanding provision at one or more of the Council's car parks.

The presentation and report set out in detail the findings of the survey of car parking capacity for Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross which showed that "parking stress" already existed and would only get worse in the future. The PAG discussed the recommendations for both Beaconsfield and Gerrards Cross as set out in the Yes Engineering report. The PAG were advised that the Resources PAG was due to consider this report at its meeting on 20 March 2014.

In the discussion which followed, it was noted that in order to avoid congestion, the location for any additional car parking would need to be carefully considered. A Member of the PAG advised that Buckinghamshire County Council were no longer proposing to remove the 1 hour prohibition on Grenfell Road in Beaconsfield.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that it was not possible to make current parking spaces narrower in order to increase the number of car parking spaces in the car parks.

Following a discussion on the importance of scoping, it was agreed that, should Cabinet agree to proceed with the design study, the Head of Environment would consult with the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Resources before submitting the final brief to the architect.

In response to a concern raised regarding the quality of the car parking data held by the Council, the PAG were advised that this was one of the aspects which the car parking shared service review included in its recent recommendations.

Having considered the advice of the PAG which supported the proposal, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED to RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that a design study be carried out with a view to providing further off street car park spaces in the District.

30. **LITTLEWORTH COMMON NEW HLS APPLICATION**

The PAG received a report which asked Members to advise the Portfolio Holder as to whether the Council should re-apply for the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) funding from Natural England for Littleworth Common for the 10 years from 2014/15.

The PAG noted the reasons why the previous application for funding, which had been made in 2011, had been withdrawn. Natural England have advised that the best way to progress the application would be to re-apply for HLS funding for the management of the smaller central area of the common. If the owner was to continue to remain uncooperative, the Council could proceed with the application but at a small risk that should the grant be successfully challenged, the funding might be withdrawn and the Council could be liable to penalties.

The PAG noted the other options for the site set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report. Having regard to the risks outlined in the report, the PAG were in support of the recommendations.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that authority be delegated to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to prepare and submit a new application for the Higher Level Stewardship funding from Natural England in respect of Littleworth Common for the 10 years from 2014/15.

31. **ENERGY SAVING ACROSS THE COUNCIL ESTATE**

The PAG received a report for information, which went to the last Health and Housing PAG, that provided Members with an update on recent activity on reducing energy use and costs to the Council and outlined the key outcomes from the fact finding Energy Audit.

The Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 16 July 2013 to undertake an Energy Audit of the whole of the Council's estate portfolio in order to see if further cost and energy savings were possible. This audit was now complete. The PAG noted the numerous energy and cost saving measures which had been identified as part of the audit that could be implemented to enable the Council to reduce its energy use and costs (as shown in Appendix B).

The Cabinet also agreed, at its meeting on 19 November 2013, to spend £17,620 in 2014/15 investing in 'quick win' energy saving projects. Appendix A of the report set out the cost saving measures to be undertaken in the financial year 2014/15. The investment would yield a saving of £16,820 in 2015/16 and thereafter.

The PAG were advised that a further report setting out the longer-term proposals for investment in energy efficiency/cost savings would be presented at the next Health and Housing PAG.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

32. **UPDATE ON WASTE ROLL OUT**

The PAG received a presentation that provided Members with an update on the new waste and recycling service which commenced on 24 February 2014.

The PAG were pleased to note that generally the first three weeks collections have been implemented well and achieved the predicted diversion rate. There had been some bin delivery issues, however reports of non-collection were relatively low and the amount of customer contact was now decreasing. The PAG noted the types of customer contacts which had been received including requests for smaller bins.

The PAG were advised of the overall performance of the new service and were presented with a number of facts and figures including the fact that residual waste had reduced by approximately 50% when compared to the same week last year and that indications were that the recycling rate was in excess of 50% compared to 25.19% for the same period last year.

Environment Policy Advisory Group - 19 March 2014

It was noted that garden waste bins were being delivered to subscribed customers ready for the service start date of 31st March 2014. Finally, the PAG received an update on Dropmore Road Depot which became fully operational on 10 February 2014.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

33. NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

The PAG received a brief verbal update on the Nature and Environment Partnership. The PAG noted that the Portfolio Holder would be attending a board meeting the next day to discuss the future direction of the Partnership and would feedback to the next meeting of the PAG.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

34. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The PAG noted how beautiful Stoke Poges Memorial Gardens was looking and expressed their thanks to those staff who continue to maintain the gardens to such a high standard.

The meeting terminated at 7.24 pm