

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 15 September 2015

Present: Mrs Sullivan (Chairman)
Mr Bradford, Mr Harding, Miss Hazell, Mr Read and Mr D Smith

11. PRESENTATION BY THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

The PAG received a presentation from David Kent on the work of the Natural Environment Partnership (NEP). Members were given the opportunity to ask questions during the presentation.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Introduction to the NEP
- Purpose of the NEP
- NEP partnerships
- Structure and membership of the NEP
- Key themes
- Work Plan Progress – over the last 12 Months
- Project locations

The PAG thanked David Kent for his presentation.

12. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 15 June 2015 were received.

With regards to ownership of Littleworth Common, the PAG were advised that the Council was still waiting for the relevant information to be provided regarding proof of ownership and adequacy of title. An update to the PAG would be given once the information had been provided.

13. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

14. CURRENT ISSUES

The PAG were advised that the Council had purchased a new cleaning street vehicle and would be issuing a press release to inform residents of the new vehicle.

15. GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION SERVICE CHARGES 2016/17

The PAG received a report on the 2016/17 Garden Waste Collection Services Charges seeking their advice to the Portfolio Holder as to whether:

1. the early bird discount of £35 should be continued for a third year during the month of February with the price rising to £45 in March;
2. an early bird discount of £36 should be introduced with the full price being £46;
3. or whether the early bird discount should cease and a charge of £40 for online customers and £45 for telephone subscriptions be charged.

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With regard to paragraph 4.4, the PAG were advised that since writing the report, an additional 150 customers had signed up to the service therefore increasing the income and erasing the projected shortfall in income of £6,500. As a result, the 2016/17 financial implications of each option, as set out in paragraph 7.1 of the report, were revised as follows:

Option 1 – the 2015/16 income forecast would be achieved based on the 2015/16 budget and revised number of customers signing up this year.

Option 2 – the 2015/16 income forecast would be exceeded by approximately £7.5k based on the 2015/16 budget and revised number of customers signing up this year.

Option 3 – the 2015/16 income forecast would be exceeded by £25k based on the 2015/16 budget and revised number of customers signing up this year (based on 80% of customers signing up online).

In connection with options 1 and 2, the PAG were advised that the early bird discount was popular with customers, with around 75% signing up during the discounted period. However, paying the full price was not considered to be a disincentive to sign up as the service was still good value for money. An incentive for customers to pay early for a short period of time helps the service operationally because extra staff can be employed during this period to process the majority of payments. The reasoning behind option 3 was that processing online payments could require a lower level of resources than for payments made over the telephone and offering a discount for paying online could reduce pressure on resources in the long term.

As stated in the report, as was the case last year from 1 September 2016 the subscription cost would be reduced to £30 for the rest of the service year.

The PAG were advised that the Council had recently brought one of its old refuse collection vehicles back into service to cope with the higher number of customers.

In the discussion which followed, a number of Members questioned whether they were in a position to advise the Portfolio Holder on which option to pursue given the absence of a breakdown of the cost of the service, including income. The PAG received an assurance that the income generated from each of the options would cover the cost of the service in 2016/17. The PAG also received an explanation as to why the 2015/16 budget had been reduced by £30,000.

One member questioned why both an early bird discount and an online discount could not be introduced.

Following consideration of the options and the benefits of the early bird discount scheme, the PAG was minded to support option 2 provided that further information was circulated demonstrating that the charges being proposed and the projected income to be received would meet the cost of providing the service.

Having considered the advice of the PAG and their concerns, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED**, subject to receiving confirmation that the charges being proposed would meet the cost of providing the service, to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that option 2 (early bird discount of £36 to be introduced during the month of February with the full price being £46 in March) be approved.

16. BRING SITE REVIEW

The PAG received a report on the results of a review of recycling bring site facilities in the District. The PAG were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on a number of recommendations set out in the report to improve services and collection efficiency.

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The review of collection data and bring site capacity monitoring has highlighted the top and bottom performing bring sites. As a result, Officers were recommending that 6 sites in total be closed due to poor performance. Appendix A provided background and a map showing the distribution of sites throughout the District which would not be significantly affected by these closures and the alternative sites that would still be available. It was also proposed that 9 sites be retained as a result of the high usage and tonnage collection.

As it was no longer possible to continue to provide small household electrical banks as a cost neutral service, it was proposed that all small household electrical banks be removed from 5th October 2015.

The PAG, having considered the results of the review and the reasons for the proposals, were in support of all the recommendations set out in the report. The PAG stressed the importance of keeping District Ward Councillors and Parish Councils informed of progress.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

1. the following bring sites (6 total) be closed;
 - Beaconsfield Motorway Services
 - Neville Court Car Park, Burnham
 - South Buckinghamshire Golf Course, Stoke Poges
 - Taplow Train Station
 - Dumb Bell Pub, Taplow
 - Post Office Lane, Wexham
2. the following bring sites (9 total) be retained;
 - The Beacon Centre, Holtspur
 - Waitrose, Beaconsfield
 - Penncroft Car Park, Beaconsfield
 - Jennery Lane Car Park, Burnham
 - Summers Road Car Park, Burnham
 - Denham Railway Station
 - The Broadway Car Park, Farnham Common
 - Packhorse Road Car Park, Gerrards Cross
 - The Evreham Centre, Iver
3. new bring site facilities at the new Bishops Centre Tesco Development be introduced.
4. all small electrical banks be removed and recycling promoted through household collections.
5. textiles banks from the South Buckinghamshire Golf Course be removed.
6. bring site capacity be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure adequate containers are provided.

17. **FIXED PENALTY NOTICES**

The PAG received an information report on the implementation of the Council's Fixed Penalty Notice Policy.

A policy regarding the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) was agreed by Cabinet in April 2013 but had not been a priority for the Authority since. Now that the Council was in a position to introduce an education and awareness raising campaign with the Bucks Waste Partnership, the necessary steps required to implement it would be undertaken.

In the discussion which followed, the PAG noted that only trained and authorised persons would be able to issue an FPN.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

18. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

19. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 following item 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."

20. **CURRENT ISSUES**

None.

The meeting terminated at 7.31pm