

ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 8 December 2015

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

Also Present: Mr Bagge

Apologies for absence: Miss Hazell

1. JWC UPDATE PRESENTATION

The PAG received a presentation on the Joint Waste Committee, detailing the work of the JWC in delivering its aims and objectives throughout the county

The PAG noted that the budget used to deliver the actions is a small percentage of the Joint Waste budget - some of this resulting from accumulated underspends. Additional funding of £838,600, which was received from the DCLG under the Recycling Rewards Scheme, will allow 12 of the Actions to be wholly or partially delivered. This will also facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive waste compositional analysis project, with the aim that the data produced would drive communication in order to influence the actions of residents, which the PAG viewed as a valuable project. The PAG further noted that the funding is not ring-fenced and can be used for other priorities and within individual authorities if all authorities are in agreement.

The presentation emphasised the remaining action points as including: a joint fly-tip campaign; jointly-funded anti-litter campaign; and development of options appraisal for a trade waste service.

Additionally, the PAG noted point 25 on the hand-out, which was particularly relevant to the PAG as South Bucks District Council are due to be the test authority for working with the third party sector to reuse more bulky waste.

2. MINUTES

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

3. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

No reports from members received.

4. BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ENERGY STRATEGY

The PAG received a report on the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy, the key aims being local energy generation, retention of money in the local economy and reduced cost of energy.

The development of an energy strategy for the County started in early 2014 with the production of a Prospectus. The Prospectus made the case for Buckinghamshire using a novel approach to strategy development based on the benefits that energy generation projects can bring, irrespective of the technology used. It is based on the premise that the people of Buckinghamshire, who want to see these benefits come to their community, will increasingly influence energy generation schemes. It focusses on opportunities for community owned energy generation projects, and on overcoming barriers to the implementation of energy schemes.

The Strategy sets out a variety of initiatives, including aims to increase the amount of home-grown energy generation which supports The Community Energy Strategy published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change, 2014.

The four key themes of the Strategy are:

- Increasing local energy generation
- Improving the efficiency of buildings
- Ensuring communities influence and benefit from projects
- Growing the local economy

Whilst the PAG supported the concept of the Strategy members were concerned that some parts were in need of updating. Members also felt that the Council should not over-commit resources into energy production in view of the recent and future reductions in the level of subsidy for electricity production. Members also felt that the current local distribution infrastructure may not be suitable for feeding electricity back to the grid.

Members understood the need to work together with communities and welcomed the commitment in the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy to promote Energy Efficiency and hoped the strategy would support an improvement in the Energy Infrastructure which had prevented local opportunities to supply power to the grid.

The Portfolio Holder, after considering the PAG's comments

RESOLVED the endorsement of the Buckinghamshire Energy Strategy and its adoption.

5. PORTFOLIO BUDGETS

The PAG considered a report seeking approval for the draft revenue budget, and fees and charges schedule for the 2016/17 Environment Portfolio.

The report outlined the context of the overall financial position facing the Council for the coming year, and reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 11th November recommended a number of saving options, none of which have yet been built into draft budgets.

The budgets have been prepared in accordance with the following inflation assumptions:

- Salaries inflation from April 2016 of 1%
- Contracts inflation 1.9% (unless different rate specified within contract)
- Business rates 1.9%
- Gas 1.8%, Electricity 9% and Water 1.9%
- Insurance 3.5% - as Insurance Premium Tax has gone up from 6% to 9.5%.
- Other expenditure heads 0%
- Income 0%.

In considering the report, the PAG particularly noted the decrease from the current year's approved budget to the 2016/2017 draft budget of £62,000, for the reasons set out in paragraph 4.4 of the report

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

- The 2016/2017 revenue budget
- The 2016/2017 fees and charges.

The meeting terminated at 7.03 pm