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SOUTH BUCKS
District Council

Cabinet

Wednesday, 27 June 2018 at 6.00 pm

Room 6, Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham

S U P P L E M E N T A G E N D A 2

Item

16. Policy Advisory Group Minutes (*Pages 3 - 28*)

To note the attached PAG Minutes:-

Environment PAG	7 June 2018
Planning & Economic Development PAG	11 June 2018
Healthy Communities PAG	12 June 2018
Resources PAG	13 June 2018
Customer Services and Business Support PAG	18 June 2018

Note: All reports will be updated orally at the meeting if appropriate and may be supplemented by additional reports at the Chairman's discretion.

Membership: Cabinet

Councillors: B Gibbs
P Hogan
N Naylor
J Read
D Smith
L Sullivan

Date of next meeting – Wednesday, 17 October 2018

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ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (SBDC)

Meeting - 7 June 2018

Present: L Sullivan (Chairman)
M Bradford

Apologies for B Harding, L Hazell, G Hollis and J Lowen-Cooper
absence:

26. MINUTES

The minutes of the Environment PAG held on 31 January 2018 were approved.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

29. CURRENT ISSUES

There were no current issues raised.

30. WEED SPRAYING UPDATE

The weed spraying trial began in April 2018 and pre-trial photographs were taken on 12 March 2018. The trial aimed to test the effectiveness of using herbicides sprayed from specialist equipment mounted to the Council's two sweepers to control roadside weeds. Biffa had reported back favourably so far but full effectiveness would not be expected for some time and would be reviewed after 6 months and periodically thereafter. The spray unit is attached to the back of the sweepers and is easily adjustable. The herbicide takes 10 to 14 days to take effect and needed to be applied in dry weather. It was noted that the County Council were contributing to the costs which included equipment and herbicide.

It was confirmed that there would be a press release to inform residents about the trial.

31. **RECYCLING AND FOOD WASTE PRESENTATION**

The Committee received a presentation on the Food Waste and Recycling Initiatives being undertaken by the team.

Great British Spring Clean initiative 2 – 4 March 2018. This had to be re-scheduled due to snow but still 22 community groups took part. They were supported by the loan of litter pickers and provided with bag containers. There is an online form for other community groups to request the loan of equipment. Photographs were shown of Beaconsfield after the Charter Fair that had been cleaned up while still car free. These photos had been shared on social media.

Communications. In the form of Calendars, guides, stickers and targeted information for flats. They were also receiving questions on Twitter and could respond quickly to these.

Digital. There has been an increase in traffic on the website and now 40% of contact was digital. They were constantly trying to make information easier to find for residents. There is also a new Waste Wizard which was set up by Fighting Food Waste using a DCLG fund. This helps residents identify the correct bin for their waste item. It also informs the team of the most searched for items.

Food Waste. Comparing January 2016 to January 2018, there has been a 45% increase in food waste collected since the change to allow plastic bags to be put in the food bin. There has also been an increase in food caddy orders during the recent promotion.

In the community. The team had been out during the Christmas period using competitions to engage with the public, into schools to run recycling workshops and attended a Freshers Fayre. Burnham & Taplow Girl Guides are receiving help with achieving their Plastic Badge.

Members were reminded that they could nominate schools or community groups that would benefit from a visit by the waste team.

32. **SOLAR POWERED BINS**

The PAG received a report to explore the feasibility of using high-tech litter bins, which use solar power to compact waste, within South Bucks' town centres. They had been trialled in other towns and it was found that locations with heavy use of litter bins could benefit. The cost of the trial would cover the loan of the solar bins only and then the lift bins would be reinstalled in the present locations. It was considered a good time to review the location of town centre bins anyway as it could be found

that some are no longer needed and this information would feed into the new contract.

It was noted that the compactor was for standard refuse only and did not include the recycling bins. There was concern about contamination from unsuitable materials but it was suggested that these bins would be located in publically visible places. They were also designed to cut out to prevent damage if unsuitable items were put in.

There were two main manufacturers to consider but both had similar products.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to approve two trials of solar powered compacting bins; one in Beaconsfield New Town and one in Denham Green shop parade, at a total cost of £2900, from the existing budget for litter bin repairs.

[Post Meeting Note: The Portfolio Holder has subsequently agreed after further consideration that a trial should take place at no extra cost to the Council. A further report would be presented to Members on the outcome of the trial].

33. **WASTE CONTRACT - JOINT WORKING**

Members of the Environment PAG were asked to advise the Portfolio Holder on the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report. The report had already been considered by the Chiltern, South Bucks & Wycombe Joint Waste Collection Committee on 23 April 2018. The Joint Waste team currently managed two contracts and agreement was sought for a long-term strategy for a 3 way contract.

A contract option review had been carried out by independent consultants and the results presented to Portfolio Holders in March 2018. It was noted that the current contract with Biffa would expire in October 2021 and could not be extended. Chiltern and Wycombe's contract would end earlier in March 2020, although there was a possibility of extension. The benefits of a 3 way Inter District Authority Agreement (IDAA) included cost efficiencies, risk sharing (particularly regarding the sale of recyclables) and economies of scale that would make the contract more attractive to bidders.

The IDAA is the formal governance mechanism that covers 3 phases; the pre contract phase, the active procurement phase and post contract operational commencement. This would set out the way costs would be apportioned and mutual indemnity.

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

1. That the Cabinet:

- (i) Notes the report;
- (ii) Agrees the longer term strategy to procure a three way single joint contract for South Bucks District Council, Chiltern District Council and Wycombe District Council;
- (iii) Agrees to enter into an Inter District Authority Agreement (IDAA) reflecting the Heads of Terms at Appendix 1;
- (iv) Delegates authority to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve the detailed terms of the IDAA.

34. **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the following item(s) 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.

35. **WASTE CONTRACT OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Members were informed of the options for procuring the delivery of waste collection, recycling and street cleansing services at the expiry of the current contracts with Serco and Biffa. The risks associated with the various options were discussed and it was noted that the Joint Waste Collection Committee had recommended the 3 way option.

The budget for the initial stage would be apportioned by number of households and would be 20.46% of the costs for South Bucks.

With regard to the tender process, it was noted that there was already an excellent optimum service provided and so there were no plans to change the specification for the new contract.

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

- 1. That the Cabinet:
 - (i) Agrees, provided that the Cabinet has agreed (earlier in the meeting) the longer term strategy to procure a three way single joint contract for Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks

District Council, that the option that should be pursued for the provision of waste etc. services post March 2020 is for Chiltern and Wycombe to agree a contract extension with Serco until the end of October 2021 to align the termination date with the South Bucks/Biffa contract, provided that such extension is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, and to commence the procurement of a single joint three-way contract to commence in November 2021. However, if the said negotiations are unsuccessful, to commence the procurement of a single joint three-way contract with a staggered commencement of March 2020 in Chiltern and Wycombe and November 2021 in South Bucks.

- (ii) Delegates authority to the Head of Environment, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Head of Finance and the relevant Portfolio Holder, to take the steps necessary to progress the option selected under Recommendation (i) above.
 - (iii) Delegates authority to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to finalise the specification of the services to be delivered.
 - (iv) Delegates authority to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder to determine the procurement method under the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
 - (v) That an initial budget of up to £300,000 be approved to fund the resources referred to in 2 (i) below, to be funded by the three Authorities in proportion to the number of households in each district (SBDC - 20.46%; CDC - 28.12%; WDC - 51.42%), with the release of funds to be to be delegated to the Head of Environment and Head of Finance in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.
2. To note the decision of the Chiltern, South Bucks & Wycombe Joint Waste Collection Committee:
- (i) That authority be delegated to the Head of Environment to procure sufficient professional and technical resources to enter into initial discussions and to prepare for and support the procurement project/s.

The meeting terminated at 6.50 pm

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PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP
11 June 2018

Present: J Read (Chairman)
M Lewis and G Sandy

In attendance: Dr W Matthews and R Sangster

101. MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as correct record.

102. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

103. REPORT FROM MEMBERS

None.

104. CURRENT ISSUES

None.

105. VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT MANAGER

Item 8 (Verbal Update from the Planning Enforcement Manager) was taken first.

Planning Enforcement Manager, Mitchell Kitts, gave a verbal update to Members on enforcement matters. It was noted that officers were exploring changes to the scheme of delegations to further support the serving of notices in a timely manner.

Members raised concerns over airport parking and the Planning Enforcement Manager assured Members that work was being undertaken to address this issue. In response to a question as to whether neighbouring local authorities (LAs) had taken action to address the issue, Members were advised that neighbouring LAs had more immediate powers to support the serving of notices. Further, that as part of the Local Enforcement Plan, officers were currently reviewing the scheme of delegations to support the Council in serving notices in a timely manner. It was noted that any proposed changes to the scheme would need to be considered by Members of the Governance and Electoral Arrangements Committee.

106. **DRAFT RESPONSE TO CURRENT CONSULTATION ON WESTERN RAIL LINK TO HEATHROW**

Principle Planning Officer, Sukhpreet Khull, provided Members with a report on the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) consultation which set out key concerns identified, and an initial draft response. The consultation was being held between 11 May and 22 June 2018, and it was noted that due to the tight timeframe in which to respond, the Council had been given an extension to early July 2018. It was noted that the PAG report would be appended to the report due to be considered by Cabinet on 27 June 2018.

The key concerns raised by residents, and by Members at the Full Council meeting 16 May 2018 included but were not limited to, the cumulative impacts of the expansion of Heathrow Airport Ltd, the impact on the Green Belt, potential for increased HGV traffic, air quality impacts on Iver, and the need for the Iver relief road.

Members were advised that, in the case that the closure of Hollow Hill Lane occurs, the delivery of the Iver relief road is essential. It is expected that Network Rail fund all necessary mitigation measures essential to reducing the impacts of the scheme on local communities. It was reported that Network Rail were using Slough Borough Council's (SBC) transport modelling against the scheme, and officers had proposed that South Bucks' also be tested. Members noted that the Council would work with SBC in supporting the best possible outcome for the local communities.

A verbal amendment was made at 3.5 of the report to read:

3.5 This consultation is statutory, however it is the final round of consultation that NR is undertaking before submitting a Development Consent Order application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2019.

Members expressed thanks to the Senior Planning Officer and to the team for preparing the report. The potential for more HGV traffic impacting the Ivers was reiterated, and it was felt that Network Rail's traffic data collected in December was flawed and out of date. Further concerns were raised relating to the potential for flooding, as well as the expectation that different operations would be using the cement plant which could create further HGV traffic in the area. It was noted that, on the plans, a building had appeared to be added at the entrance of the tunnel incorporating a car park and access road, which would create noise and light pollution in the area.

It was suggested that Members feedback to the Portfolio Holder any further concerns that may arise throughout the consultation period.

Members agreed that a draft watermark be added to the draft consultation response that will be submitted by the 22 June deadline. The final response is due to be submitted early July.

Two further verbal amendments were made to the report. It was noted that the recommendation in the report should read that the draft response be agreed by the 'Director of Services' in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, and not the 'Director of Resources'. At 5.6 of the proposed position statement, it was suggested that 'the Ivers' replace 'the Richings Park community'.

Members were advised that, at present, officers were also drafting a response to Heathrow's Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report, a consultation currently being held by Heathrow Airport.

Although Members recognised the benefits of the proposal, there were key concerns impacting local communities that needed to be mitigated if the scheme was to progress. Members of the PAG

RESOLVED:

to note the proposed work in progress/draft response to the Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) consultation - to be agreed by the Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Planning and Economic Development.

The meeting terminated at 6.47 pm

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HEALTHY COMMUNITIES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (SBDC)

Meeting - 12 June 2018

Present: P Hogan (Chairman)
D Anthony and M Bezzant

Apologies for Dr W Matthews and D Pepler
absence:

55. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

57. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

The PAG received and noted the following written update:

1. Cllr D Pepler – Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust. It was clarified that this update related to the meeting held 31 January 2018, the update provided at the previous PAG meeting related to the November 2017 meeting of the Healthcare Trust.

58. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UPDATE REPORT

The PAG received an update report provided by the Head of Healthy Communities. During discussion the following points were discussed.

- Training courses undertaken by offices within the service which included two officers who had completed the Prince 2 project management training.
- The 84% in relation to nightly booked accommodation costs referred to the overall collection rate rather than based on a percentage of individuals. Members were advised that this figure was affected by particularly vulnerable clients or where there were other mitigating circumstances.
- A review of the Council's Gambling Act and Licensing Act 2003 Policy Statement which had been out for consultation were due to be discussed at the Licensing Committee on 21 June 2018.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

59. SUMMER YOUTH DIVERSIONARY PROJECTS

The PAG received a report which looked at funding being allocated to support voluntary youth organisations in delivering diversionary activities throughout the summer school holiday period.

Members were advised that should it be approved local youth organisations would be contacted and invited to bid for funding. It was anticipated that should this funding be approved then additional funding/resource would be levered in through other external organisations.

It was clarified that the majority of children participating would be South Bucks residents although it would be difficult to prevent any children from outside the area accessing the activities.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to allocate £2,250 to support voluntary youth organisations in delivering diversionary activities throughout the summer school holiday periods.

60. **CHILTERN & SOUTH BUCKS PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

The PAG received a report informing Members of the completion of the draft Chiltern and South Bucks Council Playing Pitch Strategy highlighting its key findings and recommendations. Members were asked to approve the draft strategy for public consultation with Town and Parish Councils, sports clubs and other agencies. The finalised strategy will inform the emerging Local Plan.

Members were taken through the key aims of the policy and advised of the liaison with National Sports Governing Bodies in producing the draft strategy. The Sport England sports facility calculator was used to ascertain the required number of sports specific playing pitches and this took into account predicted changes to the population and other wider demographics. The current demand shortfall and future demand shortfall could be seen on page 19 of the reports pack.

It was explained that following consultation the strategy would be presented to key stakeholders including Town and Parish Councils, sports clubs and local environmental community groups so that they were aware of its key findings and recommendations. The strategy would then go to Cabinet for approval alongside the Open Spaces Strategy in October 2018.

Members queried how overplaying was assessed with it having been noted that over the rugby union season the amount of pitches available meant a shortfall of 11 matches. It was confirmed that these matches would still take place however these resulted in the pitch being overplayed on or the match being played outside of the District. The Leisure and Community Manager would circulate the definition used by Sport England when calculating overplaying.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to approve the draft South Bucks and Chiltern Playing Pitch Strategy for public consultation.

61. **DESIGNATION OF AN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA IN IVER**

The PAG received a report on the designation of an air quality management area in Iver. The issue was discussed at the last meeting of the PAG on 22 February 2018 when it was agreed after careful consideration, to proceed with a consultation on the basis of an AQMA covering the area of the Parish boundary due to local circumstances and the cumulative impact of infrastructure projects and developments in the area. The consultation period ended on 31 March 2018.

It was clarified that an AQMA would not prevent development but was a further tool to ensure developers thought about and addressed air quality management where feasible. Appendix 4 on pages 137 – 141 of the reports pack contained the consultation responses with the vast majority (over 90%) agreeing with the Parish boundary being used. Two additional responses had been received as seen in appendices 5 and 6 on behalf of Woodlands Park Property Limited and Pinewood Studios Group. These raised valid points and were not in agreement with the AQMA boundary being the Parish boundary. The Officer explained that these are responded to in the report.

The PAG were advised that there is an existing AQMA in place along the M25 which would be set within a proposed Iver AQMA. The Officer stated that any new AQMA documentation would reflect the existing one. However, the ability to take actions on a motorway is much more restricted, remaining under the jurisdiction of Highways England.

If a too tightly focused AQMA area was to be designated this could result in traffic being pushed to another road/area affecting air quality there.

Members were advised of an AQMA which had been in place at Chesham (Chiltern District Council) for 10 years which was now on the verge of being undeclared. Trees had been requested to be planted when planning applications had been received and buildings set back from the road allowing ventilation. Retrofitted buses also contributed to cleaner air in that area. Many London boroughs have AQMAs which cover the entire borough.

Members believed that the cumulative impact from infrastructure projects and developments were enough to justify an appropriate judgement to declare the area, as consulted upon an AQMA covering the Parish boundary.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet the approval of the AQMA Order based on the Iver Parish boundary as consulted upon under section 83 (1) of the Environment Act 1995

62. **JOINT FOOD AND HEALTH AND SAFETY BUSINESS PLANS**

The PAG received a report seeking Members' approval for the adoption of the joint Food and Health and Safety Service Plan and Food and Safety Enforcement Policies for the year 2018/19.

The Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Code of Practice and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) required local authorities to produce and publish an annual service plan that demonstrated how the authorities were working to deliver its food safety and health and safety services. The Office for Product Safety and Standards also required local authorities to produce and publish their enforcement policies and to ensure that they complied with the Regulator's Code.

The PAG was advised that the percentage of all eligible rated food premises (rating of 3 or better) continued to increase and was currently 96.4% for South Bucks District Council. Since their last inspection, 85.7% of food businesses in South Bucks DC improved their rating or stayed the same. The FSA was in the process of examining how regulatory interventions were delivered and officers would also be monitoring the impact of the UK's exit from the EU and any impact from a possible unitary authority being implemented.

It was clarified to members that routine inspections took place between 6 to 24 months driven by a risk assessment based on risks in food business, confidence in management and hygiene standards at the time of inspection. There was a cost involved in businesses requesting re-inspections so often these are left at existing ratings until the next inspection. New businesses had their inspections prioritised although there was no pre-licensing requirement to have been inspected prior to opening.

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

1. The joint Food and Health and Safety Service Plan be approved.
2. The Food and Health and Safety Enforcement Policies be approved.

63. **UNAUTHORISED ENCAMPMENTS**

The PAG was asked to consider and adopt the Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire County Council protocols for dealing with unauthorised encampments.

The PAG was advised that the protocols had been created to avoid confusion over which authority should lead and who held particular powers in certain circumstances. The purpose was to ensure that the right agency became involved at the correct time.

A Member spoke of another Local Authority who had achieved rolling injunctions on its vulnerable land and officers agreed to take this back and explore further. The potential to have by-laws introduced which had pre-emptive powers would also be looked at further by officers.

In relation to recommendation 2 as outlined in the report, Members were in agreement that a temporary tolerated site providing an area for police to move travellers on to should there be an incursion on private land would be beneficial for residents and therefore should be explored further.

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

1. The final decision to adopt the TVP and BCC protocols on unauthorised encampments be delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities.
2. Partnership work take place amongst all Bucks authorities to see if there is any scope to identify a tolerated temporary site(s) somewhere in Bucks to support the move on of unauthorised encampments.

64. **ASYLUM SEEKERS**

The PAG considered a report which looked at adopting an agreement in principle with the Home Office to accommodate Asylum Seekers.

Coastal areas in the South East had been used as a base for asylum seekers but numbers had become increasingly high in those areas. The PAG was advised that private rented accommodation would be expensive for Clear Springs to find in the area and the Home Office had powers available to require the Councils to participate in a resettlement programme although would rather local authorities follow the 'in principle' agreement route.

The PAG believed that it was the correct action to adopt an in principle agreement with the Home Office, although added that local affordability may be a difficulty for Clear Springs when looking at accommodation options.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the final decision to adopt an 'in principle agreement' with the Home Office to accommodate Asylum Seekers be delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities.

65. **DRAFT DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY 2018 - 2021**

The PAG were asked to note the report and Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018-2021 and note the resolutions made by Cabinet at the meeting held on 17 April 2018 as seen on page 297 of the reports pack.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

66. **2017/18 GRANT FUNDING REVIEW AND FUTURE PROPOSALS**

The PAG received a report which detailed the key outcomes of the 2017/18 grants programme and also sought support to introduce a crowd funding initiative to help lever additional funding to support local community groups.

The grant funding had received positive feedback and had delivered positive outcomes to local community groups. It was clarified that Heart of Bucks administered the scheme with South Bucks DC assisted with promotion. The funding was advertised extensively through community networks, websites and to SBDC Councillors.

In relation to crowdfunding, The PAG noted whilst the scheme has a strong record of attracting additional funding into local authorities across the UK still but requested other providers be explored to ensure the 5% fee which Crowdfunder were charging on successful fundraising projects and the £10k cost to use their platform was competitive. Heart of Bucks had committed to supporting the project by matching the £10k investment from SBDC and CDC Community lottery scheme. Collectively these two funds would be joined together to establish an initial funding pot of £20k. It was proposed that a project team would be set up to report back to the Portfolio Holder to take the scheme forward.

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

1. Continue to deliver 2018/19 grant funding through Heart of Bucks with a contribution of £10,000 to be match funded.
2. Establish a project to deliver a crowd funding initiative in South Bucks in partnership with Heart of Bucks and Chiltern District Council to enable improved opportunities for the community, to be funded from resources within the existing community projects budget.

67. **LEISURE CENTRE OPERATOR CONTRACT RENEWAL**

The PAG received a report advising of the requirement to commence with the process of re-tendering the leisure centre operator and advise on the next steps in order to secure best value in appointing the next operator.

Members were advised that Bucks County Council had indicated that it would not be renewing the current user agreement for the Evreham Centre beyond 2021 which would leave the Beacon Centre as the only public leisure centre operated in South Bucks.

It was explained that using Max Associates to support the procurement process meant that the tender could be aimed at a limited number of proven companies in the sector. Members were advised that any final decision would involve Member agreement. More definitive timescales would be communicated with Members as they became clearer and a Members Working Group could be established to explore the priorities and needs of the new leisure contract for 2021 and beyond.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet to integrate the re-tendering of the next leisure centre operator contract with Chiltern District Council procurement framework in order to secure best value.

68. **AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTRIBUTIONS UPDATE**

The PAG received a report which provided an update on the receipt and expenditure of section 106 Affordable Housing Contributions (AHCs) and to identify funds that were available for opportunities to deliver affordable housing, temporary or move-on accommodation.

An area of focus was to explore affordable housing opportunities and ways to move people out of temporary nightly accommodation.

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

1. Note the update on receipt and expenditure of Affordable Housing Contributions and the status of the existing schemes.
2. Agree to withdraw £358,248 of the allocated funding no longer required by existing schemes.
3. Agree to allocate £462,636 to temporary or move-on accommodation initiatives subject to final decisions on schemes being delegated to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Healthy Communities Portfolio Holder.

69. **DOG AND PEST CONTROL CONTRACT**

The PAG received a report which sought Members' approval to continue with the joint arrangements with the other Buckinghamshire authorities for dog control and stray dog collection and pest control and to tender for a new Framework Agreement to commence in June 2019.

The present Framework Agreement was due to end on 31 October 2018. It was clarified that Wycombe District Council managed the procurement of the framework whilst Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils provided the legal support. Services could be drawn from the framework as required by each Council.

It was clarified that dog fouling was incorporated into park control services although enforcement of this could be difficult. The dog warden would issue a fixed penalty notice if evidence was sufficient.

The Portfolio Holder requested that the draft Heads of Terms be revised to reflect costs incurred by South Bucks District Council. It was noted that the Heads of Terms also did not make reference to the legal charges made by South Bucks District Council.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer advised that clarification on the above would be circulated to the Portfolio Holder post meeting to inform the Cabinet recommendations.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, providing cost clarification for the Heads of Terms be provided electronically post meeting, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet:

1. To call off a new Service Level Agreement for services under the existing terms and conditions comprising dog control, stray dog collection and pest control from the existing Framework Agreement between South Bucks DC, Aylesbury Vale DC, Wycombe DC and Chiltern DC.
2. To approve the development of a new joint Buckinghamshire Framework Agreement between South Bucks DC, Aylesbury Vale DC, Wycombe DC and Chiltern DC for services comprising dog control, stray dog collection, kennelling and rehoming and pest control to commence from 1st June 2019.

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3. To agree to enter into an Inter District Authority Agreement (IAA) reflecting the Heads of Terms. To note the principles of the apportionment of procurement costs within existing budgets and agree that if additional funds are required in excess of £10,000, then further approval is sought from Members.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Healthy Communities in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve the detailed terms of the IAA.
5. To tender for a four year Framework Agreement to commence from 1st June 2019 with the ability to call off Service Level Agreement for dog control, stray dog collection, kennelling and rehoming and pest control services.
6. That the Head of Healthy Communities be authorised to draw up tender documents for the agreed services to commence from 1st June 2019.
7. That the Head of Healthy Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities, be authorised to accept the tender that represents best value and to call off specific Service Level Agreements for dog control, stray dog collection, kennelling and rehoming and pest control services.
8. That the Head of Healthy Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities be authorised to call off additional Service Level Agreements for dog control, stray dog collection, kennelling and rehoming and pest control services within the period of the Framework Agreement on receipt of good performance.

The meeting terminated at 8.25 pm

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RESOURCES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP (SBDC)
13 June 2018

Present: B Gibbs (Chairman)
S Chhokar, D Dhillon and P Kelly

Apologies for absence: R Bagge and J Jordan

39. MINUTES

The minutes of the Resources PAG held on 22 March 2018 were approved subject to an amendment to minute item 35 (para 5) to read: 'Members were informed that proposals for extra parking had the support of the Town Council and local businesses.'

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

41. REDEVELOPMENT OF FORMER GERRARDS CROSS POLICE STATION SITE

Members received the draft business case for the redevelopment project and an update on matters relating to construction costs. Revised proposed site plans were tabled at the meeting.

It was reported that the contractors cost estimates were within the target agreed with the contractor following a review of their initial feasibility cost estimates. Further, that a fixed cost was due to be received on 18 June 2018. Members enquired as to the rate of return, and were advised this was estimated at 3.67%.

It was noted that the first bat survey had been carried out, and a second survey was scheduled to be carried out July 2018, with the third and final survey provided to Natural England.

The PAG expressed thanks to the Head of Environment and the team for the work undertaken on the project to date in helping to meet the districts affordable housing needs.

Having considered the advice of the Policy Advisory Group, the Portfolio Holder agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet:

- 1. to note the current position;**
- 2. to note the final business case for the project;**

3. to note that the anticipated fixed cost of £7,831,569 is in line with the amount approved in the current Capital Programme; and
4. to increase the current approved pre-construction budget from £800,000 to £950,000 to allow detail design to be developed. However, this does not reflect an increase in the total estimated project cost but is merely a timing issue to allow the works to proceed to programme.

42. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18**

Members received the annual report on the Treasury Management performance of the Council for 2017/18, as required under the Code of Practice for Treasury Management. Members noted a modest underachievement of £37k from the budget during 2017/18 owing to market conditions and an anticipated further reduction in reserves as the Council's projects progress.

RESOLVED:

that the Treasury Management performance for 2017/18 as required by the Code of Practice for Treasury Management be noted.

43. **WRITE OFFS 2017/18**

Members considered a report on the final position for write offs for the year 2017/18.

It was advised that the main area of write offs was sundry debts. Members were reassured that the higher figures were owing to the ongoing arrears collection project. It was noted that the project had been undertaken following the shared review in which large amounts of arrears were identified.

Certain circumstances were noted in which write offs are requested for instance, if a business is bankrupt, or if the Council is no longer able to trace a debtor.

Members were informed that a progress report on the arrears collection project would be considered by the Customer Services and Business Support Policy Advisory Group on 18 June 2018. It was noted that the Council had reduced debt significantly and that, at present, collection rates had improved and income was exceeding the projected figure set out in the business case. It was advised that the report would contain comparative information on write offs and collection rates.

Members raised a concern with regards to debts that were irrecoverable due to being outside the statutory time limit for recovery, and were assured that the Council would be taking additional recovery action on debts when the service is in house from November 2018.

Members of the PAG expressed thanks to the Customer Services and Finance Teams for their work on the project to date.

RESOLVED:

That the write offs for 2017/18 be noted.

The meeting terminated at 6.34 pm

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CUSTOMER SERVICES AND BUSINESS SUPPORT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 18 June 2018

Present: D Smith (Chairman)
M Bezzant, T Egleton and D Saunders

Apologies for absence: R Reed

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the Customer Services and Business Support PAG held on 5 March 2018 were approved.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. UPDATE ON REVENUES RECOVERY PROJECT AND AUTHORISATION OF DEBTS WRITTEN OFF

The Head of Customer Services updated Members on the progress of the project to recover arrears of Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments. When the business case for the Joint Service was submitted in November 2015 the estimated income to be achieved was £98,096. The project commenced in August 2016 and was planned to last two years. At the final stages of the project the total net income is £140,000 and the expected income figure has been exceeded by over 42%. However, in some circumstances the only option available to the Council is to write the debt off as the companies in question no-longer exist and the debtors cannot be traced. Members were asked to write off 19 non domestic rates debts that have a balance outstanding of over £10,000 each as set out in the confidential appendix.

Following questions, Members were reassured that once the service came back in-house in November 2018 that any concerns about debts would continue to be monitored. Members were informed that these debts could not be sold to a third party. After a liability order had been granted the Council can instruct their Enforcement Agents to collect the debt. Members commented that often public houses got into financial difficulties because of the nature of their business.

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

- the progress of the South Bucks District Council Recovery Project be noted
- the write off of specified non domestic rates debts with values over £10,000 be authorised, where all previous recovery attempts have failed and there are no further routes of recovery as set out in the confidential appendix.

16. CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS FOR COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES

The Head of Customer Services asked Members to consider revising the current policy not to accept credit card payments in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates. Historically this Council have had a policy not to accept credit cards and in addition it previously attracted an additional charge. However, Chiltern District Council did accept credit card payments and so both services were currently working

with two different policies. Feedback from customers had indicated that customers require the facility to pay by credit card and regularly receive complaints about this option not being available. This request has increased since the removal of credit card charges. Feedback from customers indicated that many people use credit cards to manage their finances on a daily basis and this did not necessarily mean that they were in financial difficulty or increasing debt. The new Customer Experience Strategy was looking at channel shift in the way customers interacted with the Council, which included on-line facilities.

The financial implications were difficult to quantify and there would be a cost for the acceptance of credit cards which exceeded the cost of accepting debit card payments. In 2017/18 SBDC took 16,000 card payments for Revenues, at a card charge cost of approximately £16,000. The payment profile for CDC is approximately 75% debit card payments and 25% credit card payments. If this same profile applied to SBDC then the cost of taking Revenues payments would increase to approximately £28,000. However, enabling the facility to accept credit card payments could result in increased collection.

Members referred to an Audit Committee report where Members had agreed to restrict the use of the credit card and to encourage residents to use direct debit. Reference was made to the Merchant rate for mastercard credit (touchtone) of 1.789%. Members questioned whether the increased collection rate would offset the cost of credit cards.

Members noted that with credit cards the collection costs would be higher but could result in increased collection. They agreed that this option should be made available but that direct debit should be advertised as the preferred method. The Head of Customer Services reported that as part of the Customer Experience Strategy self-service was being promoted and also referred to the previous complaints received by residents regarding use of credit cards. Members agreed that residents should be encouraged to pay by direct debit but also can pay electronically.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that credit card payments be accepted in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates

17. APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Members were asked to consider an application for Discretionary Rate Relief. The organisation run two properties and applications have now been received for Discretionary Rate Relief to be awarded under S47 and S49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1989 in respect of both premises to cover backdated rates and ongoing liabilities whilst other avenues are explored to reduce ongoing liabilities further. As a Community Interest Company the Company does not automatically qualify for Mandatory Rate Relief which would have reduced the bills by 80%. However, they are applying to become a registered charity. In addition, as there are two properties it would fall outside the criteria for qualification for Small Business Rate Relief. However, they are now looking to separate as stand alone organisations to qualify for this in the future. The Company provided a valuable service to the community.

Members referred to the accounts of the organisation and questioned whether currently this was more of a commercial venture rather than a charity, particularly as they had a viable ongoing financial forecast. The Head of Customer Services commented that it operated on a not for profit basis and that any charitable or non-profit organisation was eligible to apply for discretionary rate relief. One Member expressed concern that allowing discretionary rate relief to this organisation would give them an advantage over competitors and that they needed to be equitable. However, this could be reviewed once they had obtained charitable status.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that 50% of the Discretionary Rate Relief be awarded.

18. **APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF (2)**

Members were asked to consider an application for Discretionary Rate Relief on hardship grounds. Section 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 gives the Council the power to reduce or remit the payment of non-domestic rates by granting hardship relief. The principal purpose is to provide assistance to businesses that are suffering hardship arising from circumstances beyond the businesses control. When granting rate relief on the grounds of hardship consideration was given to whether the ratepayer would sustain hardship if the Council failed to grant relief and whether it was reasonable to grant relief having regard to the interest of persons subject to the Council Tax.

The organisation commenced trading in December 2016 and in its first year of trading incurred many initial overheads and costs and the application was for full remission of rates for the 2017/18 financial year. The owner commented that if assistance was not given then the company may have to be put into liquidation.

Members commented that all businesses needed to make provision for their first year of operation and overheads and therefore considered that it was not reasonable to grant hardship relief in this instance.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that relief should not be awarded for this organisation in this instance.

The meeting terminated at 7.00 pm

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