

RESOURCES POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 27 September 2016

Present: Mr Egleton (Chairman)
Mr Chhokar, Mr Hogan, Mr Hollis, Mrs Jordan and Mr Sangster

Also Present: Mr Anthony, Mr Smith

42. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held on 16 June 2016 were received.

43. SOUTH BUCKS CAR PARKS REVIEW

The PAG considered a report asking Members to consider options for changing car parking charges and tariff bands, introducing residents' parking permits and making changes to the Off Street Parking Places Order.

Officers explained to Members of the PAG that the new range of charges (attached as Appendices C and D) reflected the use of car parking spaces throughout the district, and balanced this with the needs of the users, with the intention of supporting sustainable, thriving communities across the district. Officers reviewed the parking charges of neighbouring authorities (attached as Appendix E) to ensure that the increase in SBDC's parking charges were reasonable.

Member's noted that 1 hour, 2 hour, 3 hour and 4 hour tariffs had a proposed increase of 10p per tariff except at:

- Altons Car Park: 2 hour and 3 hour tariffs have been proposed at a higher rate to align all short stay tariffs across Beaconsfield.
- Neville Court: the higher increase enables Sunday and bank holiday charges across South Bucks to be consistent.

It was also seen that the car parking charges would be extended from 08:00-18:00 to 08:00 to 20:00, and suggested that the Head of Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder be authorised to alter the long/short stay ratio across all car parks where there is a need to do so in order to protect the local economy by supporting short stay customers.

Discussion took place within the PAG regarding residents' permits, season tickets, location tracking for pay by phone and the various changes that could be made to tariffs in order that they be more profitable.

After questions and answers, the Portfolio Holder agreed to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet the following:

Beaconsfield, Burnham, Farnham Common

- a) The introduction of new car park charges for 2017/18, as outlined at Appendix C.
- b) The introduction of an 8hr tariff on all car parks in Beaconsfield for 2017/18.

Gerrards Cross

Following completion of the proposed multi-storey car park:

- c) The introduction of new car park charges, as outlined at Appendix D,
- d) The introduction of an 8hr tariff on Packhorse Road and Station Road car parks.

All Car Parks (proposed for 2017/18)

- e) Extending the car park charging periods from 08:00-18:00 to 08:00-20:00
- f) Amending the Off Street Parking Places Order to allow flexibility to designate short stay parking bays in long stay car parks where there is a need to do so to support the local community and that the Head of Environment be authorised in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder to make the changes where appropriate.
- g) The introduction of resident parking permits, to be valid Monday to Friday 6pm to 8am and all day Saturday/Sunday.
- h) The introduction of new season ticket prices to maintain a daily charge versus season ticket cost ratio.
- i) The introduction of a 12-month season ticket to provide more options to the customer and align season ticket periods with Chiltern District Council.

And further recommended:

- 2.1 That subject to Cabinet agreeing the options at 2.1 the Head of Environment be authorised to publish the necessary statutory Notice of proposed Amendments to the Off Street Parking Places Order.
- 2.2 That, if no valid objections are received in response to publication of the Notice, the Director of Services be authorised to make and publicise the necessary Amendment Order.
- 2.3 That if valid objections are received in response to publication of the Notice, the Director of Services be authorised to deal with any such objections after consultation with the Portfolio Holder and to make and publicise the necessary Amendment Order with or without modifications as considered appropriate.

44. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT - QUARTERLY REPORT QUARTER 1 2016/17**

The PAG received a report which set out the Treasury Management performance of the Council for April-June 2016, which detailed:

- The total loans outstanding at the end of the quarter were £18m as set out within the table in paragraph 3.3.
- At the end of June, £6.630m was held in an instant access account for the purpose of day to day cash flow.
- The corporate bonds held at the end of the quarter were identified in the table in paragraph 3.6, with a total value of £1.008m.
- The table at paragraph 3.7 showed the fluctuations in cash and instant access investment levels, comparing 2015/16 against 2016/17, depicting the cyclical nature of cash outflow.

During discussions, it was explained to the PAG that the currently expected shortfall on investment income was due in part to a change in Council strategy since the budget was set, from investment of funds to using the cash for revenue generating projects. As such, SDBC are unable to tie these funds into higher-yielding long-term and medium-term investment opportunities, and therefore returns would be lower.

Discussion was also had by Members around the need to continually spread risk in terms of investment, with the counter-limits agreed as part of the Annual Treasury Management Strategy in order to balance risk and return. Members were able to recognise that as a Local Authority, there were restricted markets for investment, and that by being prudent with investments the Council's financial position should be more robust in the future.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

45. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

46. **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."

(para 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

47. **PART II MINUTES**

The Part II minutes of the meeting of the Policy Advisory Group (PAG) held on 16 June 2016 were received.

48. **GERRARDS CROSS CAR PARK**

The PAG received a report containing updated pre-construction costs for the multi-storey car park project on Station Road, Gerrards Cross.

The Head of Environment took the opportunity to answer questions submitted by email by Cllr. Anthony regarding various issues in regards to the car park project. The Portfolio Holder thanked the Head of Environment for his detailed responses.

Further to the meeting of the PAG on the 3 March, additional information was vital to facilitate the design and produce robust costings, with the Council agreeing to enter into the Scape construction framework for local authorities – already tendered to be compliant with procurement rules. This framework has been chosen as the preferred vehicle to project manage and build the car park in order to minimise time and cost, and to meet the restricted timetable. It was explained that due to the timetable, it may be necessary to arrange an extra Cabinet meeting.

Members noted that Balfour Beatty have produced “hold points” on the pre-construction stage, permitting SBDC to halt the project at any point until the date of construction order placement (end of February 2017), and to pay only what will have been spent to that date.

A discussion was held, centring on whether monies should be borrowed to finance the project, or taken from the cash reserves held by the Council. The Portfolio Holder, along with the Director of Resources, agreed with the Members of the PAG that this is something that will be looked at, in conjunction with looking at the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the cash flow requirements of the project. It was clarified that a loan model was used within the report for ease of explanation.

As a point of concern, the PAG raised the issue of there only being one lift within the design, clarified by the Head of Environment as being a 13-person lift.

After questions and answers from the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

49. **APPLICATIONS FOR HARDSHIP RELIEF**

The PAG considered 3 applications, attached to the report, for rate relief on hardship grounds.

In considering the applications, the PAG were of the opinion that to award hardship relief would not be in the best interests of the taxpayers throughout the district, setting a precedent amongst ratepayers, and promoting unfair competition.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **REFUSED** the applications for rate relief on hardship grounds.

50. **APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

The PAG considered 4 applications, attached to the report, for Discretionary Rate Relief.

In considering the applications, the PAG were of the opinion that one organisation was seen to already be receiving 80% Mandatory Relief having registered as a charity. One organisation was to be advised to register as a charity to receive 80% Mandatory Relief as a first step, with another seen to be a charity operating on a national basis with substantial funds and assets.

Discretionary rate relief was agreed in regards to one organisation in order to support locally based charities and voluntary organisations.

Having considered the advice of the PAG, the Portfolio Holder **RESOLVED** to:

1. Refuse the application for Discretionary Rate Relief for 3 organisations.
2. Grant the application for Discretionary Rate Relief from a local organisation.

The meeting terminated at 7.54 pm