

ENVIRONMENT POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday, 27th February, 2018 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr D.S. Gladstone (Chairman)

Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford
Cllr J.B. Canty
Cllr K. Dibble
Cllr C.P. Grattan
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr J.J. Preece

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Sophia Choudhary and Cllr A. Jackman.

16. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd January, 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

17. **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**

The Panel received a presentation from Phil Stoneman, Economic Development Officer, on the feasibility of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in Rushmoor. A BID was a not for profit body formed to improve a defined commercial area. The BID would be funded through a levy on business rates which was typically 1% of the rateable value although the BID Board could decide on a higher or lower levy. The BID Board would then choose to fund services and projects beneficial to the BID area using the funds raised through the levy such as marketing and promotion, entertainment/festivals, enhanced cleaning regime or improved security.

The feasibility of BIDs had been explored for Aldershot, Farnborough and North Camp town centres in 2015. A consultant had been appointed to carry out a feasibility study through surveys and workshops. There were only 41 responses to the survey and several hundred had been sent out, of those responses 92% were from independent businesses. Due to the low response to the initial consultation the decision was taken by Informal Cabinet not to pursue any BIDs at that time.

Currently BIDs had not been identified as a Council priority and pursuing a BID would involve considerable resource from the Council. A BID was estimated to cost approximately £70,000 per BID location. The Panel was advised that there could be alternative ways of resolving issues that were identified by businesses in the town

centres. The current priority for the Council was regeneration in the town centres and due to the limited Council resources it was important that focus remained on the Council priorities.

The Panel discussed the presentation and asked to be informed on the number of surveys sent out and numbers returned for each of the town centre areas. The Panel agreed that businesses would be reluctant to pay a levy on their business rates without a clear benefit for their business and many businesses, particularly in Aldershot, would rather see progress on the regeneration of the town centre rather than pay more money for a BID. It was agreed that a BID for Aldershot could be revisited once the regeneration was complete.

The Panel was advised that the Deputy Leader had already held meetings with businesses in Farnborough to bring them together and encourage the town centre areas to work more cohesively. The Panel suggested that as Farnborough town centre had changed dramatically since the feasibility work on BIDs in 2015 it was worth revisiting to see if there was renewed interest. It was suggested that there should be some initial work with the Farnborough town centre group led by the Deputy Leader to test if there was any appetite for BIDs. The three Town Centre Managers would be asked to approach their own retailers to gauge levels of interest before making any proposal to Cabinet.

The Panel suggested that radios should be provided to shops in the town centres to enable them to communicate with each other. The matter would be raised with the Safer Neighbourhood Team and the Community Safety Team.

Action to be taken	By whom	When
The Deputy Leader of the Council to be asked to raise the issue of a BID application for Farnborough town centre at the next meeting of the Farnborough town centre businesses	Phil Stoneman	16th March 2018
Raise with the Safer Neighbourhood Team the possibility of radios being provided to shops to enable communication	Phil Stoneman	16th March 2018

18. HCC TRANSFORMATION TO 2019 PROGRAMME

The Panel received details on Hampshire County Council's Transformation 2019 programme (HCC T19) which was a programme focussing on saving the County £140m over the next three years. Savings of £19m were sought from the Economy, Transport and Environment area of work. The Economy, Transport and Environment savings included areas such as highways winter maintenance, street lighting, school crossing patrols and on-street parking.

Due to the proposed changes in the structure of the Council's Panels it was agreed that there was no benefit in discussing the HCC T19 programme in detail at this

stage. It was agreed by the Panel that a proposal should be made to Cabinet for a HCC T19 Task and Finish Group to be established within the new Panel structure to monitor the impact the changes had on service delivery over the next 12-18 months. It was also proposed that members of the Group should include the current Environment Policy and Review Panel members.

Action to be taken	By whom	When
Proposal to be made to Cabinet to establish a HCC T19 Task and Finish Group in new Panel structure	Chairman	April 2018
Request that the Environment Panel members be invited to join the HCC T19 Task and Finish Group	Chairman	April 2018

19. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

CLLR D.S. GLADSTONE (CHAIRMAN)
