

## **CABINET**

**10 JULY 2018**

**PRESENT:** Councillors A Macpherson (Deputy Leader) (in the Chair), S Bowles, H Mordue, C Paternoster, Sir Beville Stanier Bt and J Ward. Councillor W Whyte attended also.

### **1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

### **2. REVIEW OF AYLESBURY VALE BROADBAND**

The background to the review of Aylesbury Vale Broadband had been detailed in the report to and the Minutes of, the Audit Committee, of 12 June, 2018, (posted on the Council's web site). The Audit Committee had approved the AVB Review Report and had resolved:-

- That it be accepted that the Review had been performed in accordance with the Council Motion and had delivered against all the objectives set out in the agreed terms of reference.
- That, having noted the caveats around warranties, the report be approved and its recommendations accepted and that their implementation be monitored through the (Audit) Committee's action tracking process.
- That the recommendations identified in the Report be reflected in the Council's "Guide to the Creation and Working with Companies in which AVDC has an interest".
- That the Council's Code of Conduct be affirmed in relation to the divulgence of confidential papers and the Democratic Manager be instructed to take account of the AVB Review recommendations in his review of the Councillors' Code of Conduct, in particular the section relating to the divulgence of confidential papers.
- That Cabinet be invited to endorse the recommendations of the Audit Committee.

The Review Report had been debated again at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 28 June, when (for the sake of completeness) the following had been agreed:-

- That this Council notes that, at its meeting on 12 June, 2018, the Audit Committee of AVDC accepted and agreed the 22 recommendations of the BDO LLP Review into AVB. As such, Council endorses the decision and formally adopts the recommendations which are to be applied to all its current and future commercial ventures. Further, a cross party group will be formed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations, the group to be appointed by the Audit Committee.
- That in view of concerns about various financial aspects of financial matters reported in the BDO LLP report on the review of AVB, the Council as 95% shareholder in AVB, agrees for a detailed examination of the accounts of AVB to

be carried out as a matter of urgency by AVDC's internal audit team and a report of this be delivered to the Audit Committee.

Members noted that the membership of the cross party group had yet to be determined but this would be dealt with over the next week or two. The terms of reference were clear, i.e. to oversee the implementation of the report recommendations only. As recommended by the Audit Committee it was particularly important for the Review recommendations concerning the divulgence of confidential papers to be addressed as part of the review of the Council's Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet endorses the recommendations of the Audit Committee as set out in the Minutes of that Committee of 12 June, 2018.

### **3. RISK REGISTER**

The Corporate Risk Register provided evidence of a risk aware and managed organisation, which recorded any managed risks which it was believed, might hinder, or indeed prevent, the Council from delivering its statutory duties or core objectives. The Register reflected the risks that were on the current radar for Strategic Board.

The Audit Committee had a role to monitor the effectiveness of risk management and internal control across the Council and as part of discharging this role, it regularly reviewed the Corporate Risk Register. The Register was last reviewed by the Audit Committee on 26 June and a copy of the document was submitted to Cabinet. Cabinet reviewed the Register twice yearly to help inform the budget setting and monitoring process.

Members were of the view that although progress had been made in relation to the recruitment and retention of professional staff (IT and planning in particular), the risk rating should perhaps remain high. Members also sought further information around the risk relating to planning for the next round of growth. Cabinet was also given an explanation of the rationale behind increasing the risk rating in respect of The Exchange which, in the main, reflected the national position around retail trading.

Lastly, Cabinet considered the need for the identification of risk to the Authority in relation to the divulgence of confidential information, as highlighted in the independent review of AVB, but appreciated that this was covered by the Council's Code of Conduct, which itself was being reviewed in accordance with the recommendations of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED –

That the comments outlined above be conveyed to the Council's Corporate Governance Manager.

NOTE: Councillor Mrs Ward, as a Director of Aylesbury Vale Estates, declared a personal interest in this item insofar as it related to this company. The reference to the company in the Risk register was not the subject of specific discussion.

#### **4. KINGSBURY AND MARKET SQUARE IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

Cabinet received a report, also submitted to the Finance and Services Committee on 9 July, 2018, and summarised in the Minutes of that meeting, concerning action plans for the improvement of Kingsbury and Market Square, Aylesbury. These improvements accorded with the Town Centre Master Plan which included a strategy for improving the quality of Aylesbury's environment and public space to help create the experience people were looking for whether living, visiting or working in, the town.

There was strong supporting evidence which showed that this type of strategy could deliver important benefits, including:-

- The attraction of inward investment from the private sector.
- Improving the wellbeing of existing residents and users of the town centre.
- Increasing the footfall, as the town became the preferred place to visit, thus generating spend in the local economy.

The report to Cabinet summarised the type of works that could be undertaken with the above objectives in mind. The report also set out indicative costs of the schemes, which were expected to cost in the region of £4.5m in total. It outlined the possible sources of funding that might be made available for these works.

A summary of the views expressed by the Scrutiny Committee was circulated at the meeting. Cabinet welcomed the degree of interest expressed by the Committee and appreciated the suggestions put forward for consideration as plans were worked up. Indeed, it was confirmed that all the suggestions would be examined as preparatory work progressed. Each element of any scheme would be carefully costed having regard to the funds made available. It was noted that the overall objectives accorded with the Town Centre Master Plan, approved previously by the Council. Whilst it was difficult to quantify a direct financial return on investment in public realm improvement, there was strong evidence that showed that it could deliver a number of intrinsic benefits, including:-

- The attraction of investment from the private sector as the town's profile rose.
- Improvements in the wellbeing of existing residents and users of the town centre.
- Increases in the footfall as the town became the preferred choice of place to visit. This would help generate spend in the local economy and enable existing businesses to thrive.
- The creation of an environment where civic pride would help to reduce ant-social behaviour.
- Support job growth.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the plans as set out in the report submitted, to bring forward improvement schemes for Kingsbury and Market Square, be endorsed.

(2) That Council be recommended to approve the following package of funding in support of the proposals:-

- The use of £1m of unallocated S106 funding for Aylesbury Town Centre.
- An application for Heritage Funding Townscape Grants of £2m.
- The use of New Homes Bonus of £1.5m (to be increased if necessary to meet any shortfall in Heritage Lottery funding).