

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF  
THE AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**18 SEPTEMBER 2019**

This meeting was webcast. To view the detailed discussions that took place please see the webcast which can be found at:

<http://www.aylesburyvaledc.publici.tv/core/portal/home>

**PRESENT:** Councillor J Brandis (Chairman); Councillors C Poll (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, C Adams, M Bateman, N Blake, J Bloom, A Bond, S Bowles, C Branston, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, J Chilver, A Christensen, A Cole, S Cole, M Collins, B Everitt, B Foster, N Glover, M Hawkett, T Hunter-Watts, T Hussain, P Irwin, S Jarvis, S Jenkins, R Khan, S Lambert, D Lyons, T Mills, L Monger, G Moore, H Mordue, S Morgan, R Newcombe, C Paternoster, G Powell, W Raja, M Rand, S Raven, S Renshell, B Russel, M Smith, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Town, A Waite and J Ward.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors J Blake, P Cooper, P Fealey, A Harrison, A Huxley, R King, A Macpherson, M Stamp, W Whyte and M Winn.

**WEBCASTING**

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet and be capable of repeated viewing.

Members of the audience who did not wish to be on camera were invited to move to a marked area at the side of the chamber.

**1. MINUTES**

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 July, 2019, be approved as a correct record.

**2. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(a) Chairman of the Council**

The Chairman informed Members that she had recently attended the Ganesh Hindu festival in Aylesbury and the Waterside Festival, Aylesbury, on Saturday 14 September. The Chairman expressed thanks to all of the Council staff who had been involved in organising and running the Waterside Festival.

**(b) Deputy Leader of the Council**

**Brexit**

The Deputy Leader updated Members on the preparations being made by AVDC in relation to Brexit. The Deputy Leader emphasised that despite individual views on whether to remain or leave (with or without a deal), it was the Council's responsibility to ensure that it was ready for all eventualities in the interests of the communities it represented.

The nominated Brexit officer was Andrew Small, the Head of Paid Service and he was being supported by Andy Barton, Assistant Director Business Strategy and Support. A

number of actions had been put into place to ensure that the Council could continue with the safe running of services as closely as possible to normal.

The Council was playing an active part in the local resilience forum and was also working in partnership with the other local authorities in Bucks, sharing skills and knowledge. Cabinet had asked to receive regular updates on this subject and in turn, Council as a whole would be kept informed of developments.

### **Community Board Consultation**

The Deputy Leader informed Members that the Shadow Authority was currently undertaking public consultation in relation to proposals and a number of options for establishing Community Boards for the new Buckinghamshire Council. The Deputy Leader encouraged Members to respond to the consultation by 30 September 2019. The last of the information events for Councillors would be held at the South Bucks District Council offices on 24 September.

### **Portfolio Group – Member Challenge Panels**

The Deputy Leader informed Members that the Shadow Executive had allocated portfolios to its Members. There was now an opportunity for AVDC Members to take part in Portfolio Group Member Challenge Panels and play an active and constructive role to help shape the new Buckinghamshire Council. Members interested in taking part in the Panels were asked to contact the Deputy Leader.

## **3. PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)**

With reference to the items on this evening's agenda relating to environmental issues within the context of climate change, the Council heard from the following:-

- (i) Sarah Feeney (Extinction Rebellion Aylesbury Vale) – who made a statement with regard to the Notice of Motion: Climate Change, with reference to the scientific evidence, the local economic advantages and the environmental imperative of a rapid response to climate change.
- (ii) Ed Campbell (Aylesbury Grammar School student) – who gave a presentation on the work he was doing to discourage the use of non biodegradable plastics which had been proven to be having a seriously adverse affect on the environment.
- (iii) Lola Wardrop (local Junior School pupil) – on the work of “Kids Clean Britain” which was working hard to discourage the deposit of litter and educate people about the harm this does to the environment.

Members expressed their thanks to Sarah, Ed and Lola for coming along to Council and assured them that the views they had expressed would be taken fully into account in Members' discussions later during the evening.

## **4. WRITTEN QUESTIONS (IF ANY)**

Members were reminded that written questions submitted since the last meeting of the Council could be viewed on the Council's website.

## **5. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER (RO) AND ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER (ERO)**

The Returning Officer (RO) was the person with overall responsibility for the conduct of elections in the District of Aylesbury Vale. Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983, required the Council to appoint an officer to be the RO in local elections. Although an officer of the Council, the role of RO was a personal responsibility, independent and separate from the individual's duties as an employee of the Council.

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) was the person with statutory responsibility for the creation and maintenance of the Register of Electors and the Absent Voters List. This person was responsible for publishing a revised electoral register and issuing alteration notices. The ERO was also the Acting Returning Officer for UK Parliamentary Elections.

At AVDC, the RO and the ERO had traditionally been held by the Head of the Paid Service (previously Andrew Grant). Following his departure, Council agreed to divide his responsibilities between the remaining two directors. Andrew Small had taken the role of Head of the Paid Service and Tracey Aldworth had been appointed RO/ERO.

Tracey Aldworth had subsequently left the Council's employment and Andrew Small was leading on the transition to a unitary authority which was taking up a significant amount of his time. The Assistant Director for Commercial Property and Regeneration, Teresa Lane had a number of years' experience in the conduct of elections, including local, parliamentary and EU elections and referendums. It was proposed that Teresa Lane be appointed as RO/ERO for the period up to 31 March, when the new unitary authority would come into existence. The role of RO and ERO covered an extensive range of duties at election time and it was necessary to appoint Deputies to assist with the various elements.

It was proposed by Councillor Bowles, seconded by Councillor C Adams, and

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Teresa Lane, Assistant Director for Commercial Property and Regeneration be appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer with effect from the date of this meeting up to and including 31 March, 2020 in accordance with the requirements of the Representation of the People Act, 1983.
- (2) That Ifty Ali, Lead Legal and Monitoring Officer be appointed Deputy Electoral Registration Officer for the period referred to in (1) above.
- (3) That the following officers be appointed Deputy Returning Officers for all elections, and as Deputy Counting Officers for Neighbourhood Plan referendums with effect from the date of this meeting up to and including 31 March, 2020:-
  - Ifty Ali (Lead Legal and Monitoring Officer)
  - Andy Barton (Assistant Director Business Strategy and Support)
  - Bill Ashton (Democratic and Electoral Manager)
  - Jo Hart (Electoral Specialist)
  - Craig Saunders (Democratic Specialist)

## **6. AVDC ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES**

At the last Council meeting the Leader had given notice that she had asked officers to report on initiatives that might be pursued by the Council as part of its continuing commitment to maintaining the environment of the Vale, recognising that it was becoming increasingly more important to mitigate the effects of climate change. Already this evening Members had heard from two young people speaking about the actions they were taking in this context.

Council received a report submitted also to Cabinet on 11 September, 2019, suggesting a possible and viable way forward for maintaining the Council's momentum in this respect and recognising the imminence of transition to a unitary authority for Buckinghamshire. The report summarised all those actions already taken by the Council, in particular to reduce CO2 emissions and proposing the allocation of funding towards future initiatives built around supporting the local community and partnership working. The report was summarised in the Minutes of Cabinet and was available to view in full on the Council's website.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the work already undertaken on environmental issues across the Vale, and the proposal to continue this work through the environmental initiatives programme summarised in the Cabinet report be noted.
- (2) That approval be given to the release of up to £60,000 from General Fund unallocated balances to enable the continuance of the Council's environmental initiatives.

## **7. NEW NOTICE OF MOTION: CLIMATE CHANGE**

The following had been submitted by Councillor Stuchbury and seconded by Councillor Bateman:-

“It is now clear that the world has less than 12 years to switch from fossil fuels to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Reducing use and switching to clean energy will also increase energy security, improve air quality, minimise fuel poverty, boost the local economy and provide employment/training opportunities.

This Council therefore declares a climate emergency and commits to asking the future Buckinghamshire unitary authority to become carbon neutral by 2030.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Chairman had agreed that the Motion should be dealt with at this meeting.

Councillor Stuchbury explained briefly the rationale behind the Motion after which it was opened up to debate.

It was thereupon proposed by Councillor Irwin and seconded by Councillor Everitt:-

“That the motion be amended as follows:-

- “1. AVDC declares a climate emergency that requires urgent action.
2. In line with Government policy council agrees to setting Aylesbury Vale on a carbon reduction pathway towards making it carbon neutral.

3. Council is asked to note the success to date in helping to reduce our CO2 impact.
4. Council is asked to approve further measures to help Aylesbury Vale's carbon reduction pathway by:  
  
Setting up a Partnership Climate Change Group in order to involve the wider population and key stakeholders. (It is essential because it is their future that young people are included in this initiative).  
  
Publicising and promoting measures residents can take to help reduce climate change.  
  
Lobbying its MPs to call on the Government to provide more funding to help us undertake the changes required to help to reduce the carbon footprint in Aylesbury Vale and its dependence on fossil fuels.
5. Council is asked to recommend to the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council that it continues the legacy of AVDC's Carbon reduction pathway and adoption of its successful environmental measures".

After an explanation of the rationale for the amendment, it was opened up to debate. At the conclusion of the debate 5 Members present requested that recorded votes be held on any amendments or substantive proposals considered in relation to this motion. Following the recorded vote on the amendment, it was declared to be CARRIED. Voting was as follows:-

FOR: Councillors Mrs Bloom, Bond, Bowles, Mrs Brandis, B Chapple OBE, Mrs S Chapple, Chilver, A Cole, Collins, Everitt, Foster, Mrs Glover, Hawkett, Irwin, Mrs Jenkins, Mills, Moore, Mordue, Newcombe, Mrs Paternoster, Poll, Powell, Rand, Mrs Renshell, Mrs Russel, Sir Beville Stanier, Strachan, Town and Mrs Ward.

AGAINST: Councillors Bateman, N Blake, Christensen, Hussain, Hunter-Watts, Mrs Jarvis, Lambert, Lyons, Monger, Mrs Morgan, Raja, Raven, Smith and Stuchbury.

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors B Adams, C Adams and S Cole.

The motion as amended was then opened up to debate as the substantive motion. It was thereupon proposed by Councillor Monger and seconded by Councillor Lyons that recommendation (5) be amended by the addition of the following words at the end of the sentence:-

"in order that the new authority is carbon neutral by 2030."

At the conclusion of the debate a recorded vote was taken on the amendment that was declared to be CARRIED. Voting was as follows:-

FOR: Councillors B Adams, C Adams, Bateman, Mrs Bloom, Bond, Bowles, Mrs Brandis, Mrs S Chapple, Christensen, A Cole, S Cole, Collins, Everitt, Foster, Mrs Glover, Hawkett, Hunter-Watts, Hussain, Irwin, Mrs Jarvis, Mrs Jenkins, Khan, Lambert, Lyons, Mills, Monger, Mordue, Moore, Mrs Morgan, Newcombe, Mrs Paternoster, Poll, Raja, Raven, Mrs Renshell, Mrs Russel, Smith, Sir Beville Stanier, Strachan, Stuchbury, Town and Mrs Ward.

AGAINST: There were none.

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors B Chapple OBE, Chilver, Powell and Rand.

The motion as amended was then put to the meeting as the substantive motion and declared to be CARRIED. Details of the recorded vote were as follows:-

FOR: Councillors B Adams, C Adams, Bateman, Mrs Bloom, Bond, Bowles, Mrs Brandis, Mrs S Chapple, Chilver, Christensen, A Cole, S Cole, Collins, Everitt, Foster, Mrs Glover, Hawke, Hunter-Watts, Hussain, Irwin, Mrs Jarvis, Mrs Jenkins, Khan, Lambert, Lyons, Mills, Monger, Mordue, Moore, Mrs Morgan, Newcombe, Mrs Paternoster, Poll, Raja, Raven, Mrs Renshell, Mrs Russel, Smith, Sir Beville Stanier, Strachan, Stuchbury, Town and Mrs Ward.

AGAINST: There were none.

ABSTENTIONS: Councillors B Chapple OBE, Powell and Rand.

RESOLVED –

That the Council

- (1) Declares a climate emergency that requires urgent action.
- (2) In line with Government policy, agrees to setting Aylesbury Vale on a carbon reduction pathway towards making it carbon neutral.
- (3) Notes the Council's success to date in helping to reduce our CO2 impact.
- (4) Approves further measures to help Aylesbury Vale's carbon reduction pathway, namely:
  - Setting up a Partnership Climate Change Group in order to involve the wider population and key stakeholders. (It is essential because it is their future that young people are included in this initiative).
  - Publicising and promoting measures residents can take to help reduce climate change.
  - Lobbying its MPs to call on the Government to provide more funding to help us undertake the changes required to help to reduce the carbon footprint in Aylesbury Vale and its dependence on fossil fuels.
- (5) Recommends to the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council that it continues the legacy of AVDC's Carbon reduction pathway and adopts AVDC's successful environmental measures in order that the new authority is carbon neutral by 2030.

**NOTE: Councillor Branston attended the meeting from Item 8 onwards.**

## **8. NEW NOTICE OF MOTION: TO OPPOSE THE OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE EXPRESSWAY**

The Chairman of the Council informed Members that as Councillor Lyons had declared a prejudicial interest, Councillor Stuchbury would be moving the motion on his behalf.

The following was proposed by Councillor Stuchbury and seconded by Councillor Bateman:-

"Council notes that the UK Government, in tandem with the National Infrastructure Commission, has proposed the construction of a motorway style expressway between

Oxford and Cambridge. This new road will have significant adverse impacts on Aylesbury Vale.

Depending on the eventual route, the expressway could destroy farmland and habitats, including an SSSI. Construction projects should result in biodiversity net gains. However the “gained” biodiversity may not be the same as that which has been lost. Some, such as ancient woodland is irreplaceable. Infrastructure providers will offer to offset the negative impact in one place by protecting or replacing biodiversity elsewhere, which is of little benefit to local residents or wildlife.

The Council does not support the construction of another motorway such as the expressway at a time of climate emergency. Transport accounts for one third of all carbon emissions in the UK and the figure has only dropped by 3.2% since 1990. The expressway will increase CO2 emissions, which is incompatible with the Government’s declared target of reducing emissions to net zero by 2050, and will bring more traffic onto the County’s existing roads.

The Council believes that the expressway will cause major harm to the quality of life of Vale residents as it passes through the District. The additional noise from the expressway will be significant as well as increased air pollution from NOx, hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide and particulate matter.

The Council was right not to sign a non disclosure agreement with Highways England.

Highways England’s own analysis of the expressway shows a low benefit cost ratio (BCR) in the range of 1.1 – 1.3.

This Council fully supports the East-West Rail route, with full electrification and use of the rail line for freight as part of the strategic rail network, offering direct connections to the West Coast Mainline.

Council therefore resolves to:-

- Oppose the expressway project and support the electrification of the East-West Rail route for passenger and freight traffic as part of the strategic rail network. We should encourage these intermodal connections to East-West Rail to discourage long distance freight by road.
- Support better east west public transport and active rail solutions.
- Adopt this position on the expressway in the future consultation on the route options from Highways England.
- Continue to support environmental partnership working, particularly the work of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership, and continue to promote these elements as vital mitigation if the expressway does progress.”

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Chairman had agreed that the Motion should be dealt with at this meeting.

Councillor Stuchbury explained briefly the rationale behind the Motion after which it was opened up to debate.

It was thereupon proposed by Councillor Lambert and seconded by Councillor Christensen:-

“That the motion be amended by the inclusion of an additional recommendation as follows:-

“That the Council writes to local MPs to express our dismay, and to outline to them the 4 bullet points in the motion, and to ask for their support in the Council’s endeavours”.”

After an explanation of the rationale for the amendment, it was opened up to debate. At the conclusion of the debate it was put to the vote and declared to be CARRIED.

The motion, as amended, was then put to the vote as the substantive motion and declared to be CARRIED.

RESOLVED –

That the Council –

- (1) Opposes the expressway project and supports the electrification of the East-West Rail route for passenger and freight traffic as part of the strategic rail network. This includes to encourage these intermodal connections to East-West Rail and to discourage long distance freight by road.
- (2) Supports better east west public transport and active rail solutions.
- (3) Adopts this position on the expressway in the future consultation on the route options from Highways England.
- (4) Continues to support environmental partnership working, particularly the work of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Natural Environment Partnership, and continues to promote these elements as vital mitigation if the expressway does progress.
- (5) Writes to local MPs to express the Council’s dismay, and to outline to them the points detailed in resolutions (1)-(4), and to ask for their support in the Council’s endeavours.

NOTE: Councillor Lyons declared a prejudicial interest as he was employed by Network Rail. He left the Council Chamber whilst the notice of motion was being considered.

## 9. QUESTION TIME

Members had the opportunity to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen about issues affecting their portfolios/Committee activities:-

- (a) **Bicester Cycle Routes (Councillor Hunter-Watts)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that he was aware of a series of new mapped cycling routes that had been introduced across Bicester, funded by an NHS scheme, and aimed at encouraging people of all ages and abilities to take up cycling. The Cabinet Member would pass on this information to the County Council who were responsible for cycling routes infrastructure.
- (b) **Environmental Initiative: Tree Planting (Councillor Branston)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members on the tree planting projects that he hoped to instigate as part of the Environmental Initiatives



referred to earlier during the meeting. In due course, Councillors would be able to apply for funding for tree planting in their Wards.

- (c) **Street Cleansing (Councillor C Adams)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure gave an undertaking to provide the Member with a schedule of street cleansing for the Vale.
- (d) **Highways Maintenance (Councillor C Adams)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that there was no integration between the 'Fix My Street' reporting system on the Count Council's website (whereby members of the public could report a highways issue relating to roads, footways, traffic lights and street lights) and AVDC's systems. As such, there wasn't a system for AVDC to automatically feed back information. However, such functionalities were being explored as part of the work to establish the new unitary Council.
- (e) **HS2 (Councillor Chilver)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure confirmed that AVDC would continue to lobby HS2 to cease all clearance work in the north of the Vale while the project was being reviewed by the Government, and to ensure that meaningful community engagement was undertaken before any further works were done. Members were informed that the Council had written to local MPs on these matters and had also written to HS2 requesting a meeting.
- (f) **Whizz Fizz Festival, Aylesbury (Councillor Lambert)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure explained how visitor numbers to events such as the Whizz Fizz Festival in Aylesbury were calculated. The numbers were partly informed by footfalls through the shopping centres in the town centre and it was acknowledged that not everyone that had been shopping would have attended the festival.
- (g) **Fly Tipping (Councillor Lambert)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that he had spoken to Officers at the County and District Councils, who were not aware of any increase in instances of fly tipping since the County Council had introduced charges for disposing of some waste at Household Recycling Centres.
- (h) **Electrification of East West Rail (Councillor Powell)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure informed that there had been cutbacks to electrifying all of the EW rail line. However, she believed that this situation would be rectified retrospectively for passenger and freight traffic.
- (i) **Waste Collections post Brexit (Councillor Powell)** – the Cabinet Member for Waste and Licensing informed Members that the Council was taking all possible steps to ensure that the Council's waste and recycling collections were not disrupted post Brexit.
- (j) **Aylesbury Vale Broadband (Councillor Monger)** – the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources informed Members that while AVB was dormant, the final position in relation to its liabilities would not be known until the company was wound up.
- (k) **Planning Department (Councillor Monger)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure informed Members that there were two senior Officers who were responsible for managing the Planning Department. Responsibility for the running of the service now sat with the Cabinet Member for

Planning and Enforcement who would be happy to respond to any queries raised by Members.

- (l) **Tree Planting / Section 106 (Councillor Mrs Jenkins)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that the Council was proactive in asking for ecological mitigation and improvements to be provided with new planning applications, where this was possible.
- (m) **Bucks Home Choice Revised Allocations Policy (Councillor Stuchbury)** – the Deputy Leader of the Council informed Members that the Bucks Home Choice Revised Allocations Policy would come into effect from 1 October, 2019. Further information could be found on the Bucks Home Choice website at [www.buckshomechoice.org.uk](http://www.buckshomechoice.org.uk) .
- (n) **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) (Councillor Stuchbury)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure informed Members that CIL was not part of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan. CIL would need to be agreed within the first 2 years of the VALP having been adopted and, as such, this would likely be after 1 April 2020.
- (o) **Oxford-Cambridge Expressway (Councillor Everitt)** – in respect of the Notice of Motion: To oppose the Oxford-Cambridge Expressway that had been agreed earlier, the Deputy Leader of the Council agreed that the Leader of the Council or himself would similarly write also to the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Transport.