

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

23 OCTOBER 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, J Bloom, A Bond, S Bowles, J Chilver, A Cole, S Cole, B Everitt, P Fealey, B Foster, N Glover, M Hawkett, A Huxley, P Irwin, S Jenkins, R Khan, R King, D Lyons, L Monger, G Moore, H Mordue, S Morgan, R Newcombe, C Paternoster, G Powell, W Raja, M Rand, S Renshell, B Russel, M Smith, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, R Stuchbury, D Town, A Waite and M Winn.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors J Blake, N Blake, C Branston, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, A Christensen, M Collins, P Cooper, A Harrison, T Hunter-Watts, T Hussain, S Jarvis, S Lambert, A Macpherson, T Mills, S Raven, M Stamp, P Strachan, J Ward and W Whyte.

## 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.

## Mr Michael Cook

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, Members and officers present stood in silent tribute to the memory of former Councillor Michael Cook who had passed away recently. Mr Cook had been a Member of the Council for 17 years representing the Brill Ward between 1974 and 1991.

## 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18 September, 2019, be approved as a correct record.

## 2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Chairman of the Council

The Chairman thanked staff and Members who had attended the Chairman's recent Quiz evening and had made the night such a success.

The Chairman also informed Members that she had recently attended the Hindu Festival of Lights in the Aylesbury town centre.

## 3. PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were none.

#### 4. PRESENTATIONS BY THE CHIEF CONSTABLE OF THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Members welcomed John Campbell QPM, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, and Superintendent Michael Loebenberg (Local Police Area Commander, Aylesbury) to the meeting. Apologies had been sent by Mr Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Chief Constable gave a presentation during which the following main points were noted:-

- The Thames Valley Police (TVP) had recently been inspected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) for 2018/19 and been graded as good against the important areas of effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy.
- That the TVP aimed to deliver an excellent service and be regarded as an outstanding force. This would include:
  - Focussing on crime reduction and the disruption of criminal activity, creating a hostile environment for those that would do harm.
  - Providing a caring, effective and swift response to those in need when people called for help.
  - Where crimes were committed, investigating them appropriately and relentlessly to seek justice for victims.
  - The response to major and serious incidents and policing operations being first class.
- That the priority outcomes for 2019/20 were to:-
  - Reduce crime and incidents through targeted and effective problem-solving.
  - Bring more criminals to justice by improving the quality and timeliness of investigations.
  - Improve how TVP protected the vulnerable by proactively identifying, understanding and reducing risk and harm.
  - Increase the satisfaction of victims and other people in need by responding appropriately and improving communication with them.
- Some of the various actions that TVP would be focussing upon to achieve these outcomes, e.g. problem solving would include a focus on knife crime, the disruption of organised crime groups (including rural crime), County drug lines and making the best use of time and resources by effectively reducing need.
- Information provided on call volumes. The average time to answer 101 calls during April-September 2018 had been 8 minutes, but this had reduced to an average of 3 minutes as of September 2019.
- Information on Officer assaulted during 2019, as follows:-
  - 589 officers assaulted during use of force incident Force wide (26 in Aylesbury Vale).
  - 216 officers had been spat at Force wide (5 in Aylesbury Vale).
  - 23 officers exposed to blood borne virus risk Force wide (1 in Aylesbury Vale)
- Key crime figures over the last 12 months for assault (GBH), rape (domestic), burglary (dwellings and sheds/garages) and theft of vehicles.
- That some of the crime prevention programmes had included a Summer Burglary Campaign and targeting Knife Crime
- Information on Community Resilience initiatives including the Specials Rural Crime Team, Community Speedwatch and the Farmer Resilience Network.
- Information on local issues including County Drug Lines and Organised Crime.
- Information on local Problem Solving including responses to street drinking and begging in Kingsbury, operations that had targeted tactical burglary in the north of the Vale and on the Nash travellers' site.

Members were informed that since 2010 the TVP had seen the force's size reduce by 700 uniformed officers and 600 back office staff. The Government had recently announced the recruitment of an additional 20,000 officers nationwide. The first tranche of this recruitment had started although it would take some time for new recruits to be trained.

The Chief Constable and Aylesbury Vale LPA Commander then responded to various comments/questions from individual Members on a range of issues, including:-

- that Police Stations were not usually staffed overnight as all available officers would be out on patrol. TVP would endeavour to respond to all calls, serious ones in particular, as soon and as fast as was possible.
- that there had been a reduction over the last few years in the number of dog handling units that corresponded to reductions in other policing areas such as staffing.
- an explanation of the circumstances under which TVP would be able to issue cautions. However, for many serious types of offences this was not possible and matters had to be decided by the courts.
- an explanation of how TVP managed policing of homeless and vulnerable people.
- that it was recognised that there were likely too many (43) police forces across the UK, although there weren't currently plans for any mergers.
- that the Crime Survey for England and Wales was an important monitor of the extent of crime in England and Wales.
- that while TVP were supportive of Community Speed Watch, e.g. speeding and speed limits through villages, it was also a difficult area to police.
- on the initiatives being undertaken to combat rural crime that included a rural Whatsapp. This was assisted by Aylesbury Vale also having the largest social media following of any policing area in the Thames Valley.
- that hate crime was not a significant issue for Aylesbury Vale, although there did tend to be spikes following terrorist attacks and when there were Brexit votes.
- acknowledging that there was a likely link between fraud targeting vulnerable people. The police were open minded to exploring new ways of working such as the establishment of a National Anti-Fraud Organisation to take some workload/responsibility away from police although it was also important for local police to be aware of what was happening in their areas.
- that it was unlikely that people who were subjected to domestic violence would be more likely to lose custody or access to their children.
- that the TVP had established a team in September of a Sergeant and 5 officers who were specifically looking at the recruitment of people who came from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.

In conclusion, the Chairman and Members expressed their sincere thanks to the Chief Constable and the Aylesbury Vale Local Police Area Commander for the opportunity to engage in a frank and informative exchange of views.

## 5. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Members were informed that no written questions had been submitted during September 2019. Previous Members' written questions could be viewed on the Council's website via the link printed on the agenda.

## 6. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

A report, similar to that submitted to the General Purposes Committee on 30 September, 2019, and summarised in the Minutes of that meeting, concerning the final recommendations from the review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, was submitted.

The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 had introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. All local authorities were required to conduct reviews every five years and needed to conduct this review between 1 October 2018 – 31 January 2020.

This review did not cover the boundaries of District Wards, Parishes, County Divisions or Parliamentary Constituencies. These followed separate processes.

The recommendations to Council were that the majority of polling arrangements be unchanged. However, Appendix B detailed the options for Stoke Mandeville Village where a change of location was recommended as follows:-

**Stoke Mandeville: Stoke Mandeville Village** – that the polling station for future elections should be Stoke Mandeville Methodist Church (Eskdale Road), with the current polling Station (Stoke Mandeville Village, also located in Eskdale Road), being retained as a backup option.

The Returning Officer had the power to make variations to the current arrangements after consultation which enabled any issues that arose between the statutory reviews to be addressed.

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

RESOLVED –

That Council approves the Schedules of Polling Districts and Polling Places attached as appendices A and B to the report submitted, incorporating the change in relation to Stoke Mandeville Village.

## 7. QUESTION TIME

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

- (a) **Property Management Companies (Councillor Stuchbury)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure informed Members that it was a decision solely for property developers whether they passed open space to the Council (who might then be able to pass it to a Parish Council), or passed the open space to a management company.

- (b) **Aylesbury Vale Broadband (Councillors Newcombe, Monger and Mrs Morgan)** – the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources informed Members that the sale of AVB to Gigaclear was subject to a non-disclosure agreement which meant that the final position would not be made public until AVB became dormant and the final accounts were settled. It was possible that this process would not be concluded until after 1 April 2020.
- (c) **AVDC Environmental Initiatives (Councillors Monger and Lyons)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that a workshop had been held earlier that day between a range of stakeholders, including the County Council, to look at actioning the environmental initiatives that had been approved by full Council in September. He also gave an undertaking to issue guidance/instructions to staff and visitors to the Gateway to encourage people to use the revolving front door when accessing the building rather than the automatic opening doors.
- (d) **High Speed 2 (impact on Chalk Streams) (Councillor A Cole)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure informed Members that he was aware that the HS2 project was struggling to find the water supply it needed to tunnel through the Chilterns, which was likely in turn to harm ecologically vulnerable chalk streams in the area. The Council would continue to lobby HS2 on this as well as many other issues that were detrimentally impacting on the Vale.
- (e) **Non-Determination of Planning Applications (Councillor Lyons)** – the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure informed Members that less than 1% of planning applications received by AVDC were appealed due to non-determination. The reasons that planning applications were not determined within specific times was varied and was often due to outside factors such as waiting for consultation responses from developers or the highways authority.
- (f) **Carbon Neutral by 2030 (Councillor Lyons)** – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure confirmed that following the September full Council meeting, he would be writing to the Buckinghamshire Shadow Authority asking for the new Buckinghamshire Council to commit to being carbon neutral by 2030. A copy of that letter would be provided to all Members.
- (g) **Targets for Council Tax Collections and new Benefits Claims (Councillor Everitt)** – the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources informed Members on Aylesbury Vale’s performance in collecting Council Tax due, and in processing new applications and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax support. In all instances, AVDC’s performance was much better and quicker than the targets set by the Government.