

Minutes

Cabinet

Date: 10 January 2019

Venue: Mezzanine Room 1 - County Hall, Aylesbury

Time: 8.40 am to 9.10 am

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr M Tett (in the Chair).

Mr M Appleyard, Mr N Brown, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Lin Hazell, Mr M Shaw and Mr W Whyte

OTHER MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr A Hussain, Mr C Harriss and Mrs A Cranmer

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms R Bennett, Mrs S Ashmead and Ms R Shimmin

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Deputy Cabinet Members in attendance were Mrs A Cranmer, Mr A Hussain and Mr C Harriss.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3 UNITARY TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

Mr M Tett, Leader introduced the item and highlighted the following background:

- Initial plans for a single unitary authority was initiated in 2014 by Aylesbury Vale District Council.
- Buckinghamshire County Council put forward their business case to Government in 2016 for the creation of a single unitary council, followed by a separate District submission in February 2017 for two separate authorities.
- In March 2018 the Secretary of State announced a 'minded to' decision to agree the County Council's business case. There was then an extended period for representations and then in November 2018 the new Secretary of State announced the continued support of the County Council's business case.
- Representations had been made for the governance of the implementation and the Secretary of State had released a letter setting out those areas that the five councils could not reach a consensus on.
- Mr Tett stated that the County Council wanted to work in partnership with the district colleagues in the creation of an entirely new council. The creation of the new council was for the benefit of residents and required the input of colleagues across all five councils.

Ms R Shimmin, Chief Executive, reiterated messages that had been made to staff highlighting the importance of the change and the impact for residents, businesses, partners and staff across the county. It would see a creation of a brand new council for Buckinghamshire and would have a significant impact on all our staff. County and district colleagues were working collaboratively in order to create a council all could be proud of. Ms Shimmin gave assurances to all staff at county and district councils that it was a new authority that would build on the best of all the councils.

Ms S Ashmead, Executive Director and Monitoring Officer attended the meeting to outline the process going forward. Ms Ashmead drew Cabinet's attention to the following:

- The report asked Cabinet to give consent to the making of Regulations by the Secretary of State.
- Ms Ashmead wanted to ensure that Members were clear about the distinction between the Regulations and the Structural Changes Order, both of which were required legislations to go through Parliament in order to implement the unitary proposal.
- Firstly the Regulations were required in order to streamline the process and to enable to the Secretary of State to lay a Structural Change Order in relation to Buckinghamshire; and Cabinet were being asked to consent to those Regulations
- The Secretary of State required at least one council to consent to the Regulations and the name of the councils in agreement would be included in the Regulations which would be laid on Monday 14 January.
- The second piece of required legislation was the Structural Changes Order which would include details of implementation, transition arrangements and details of the new council, the content of which was also set out in the report.

- The Structural Change Order would be laid later than the Regulations and therefore assurances had been sought on the expected content of the Structural Changes Order in order for Members to be able to make a decision on giving consent to the Regulations.
- Included in the reports pack was a letter from the Secretary of State setting out his intentions of what would be in the Structural Changes Order.
- Ms Ashmead confirmed that Cabinet were only being asked to give consent to the Regulations and not to the content of the Structural Changes Order.

Mr Tett echoed the message by the Chief Executive and stated that the creation of the new council would be a team effort and each member of staff across the county and district councils were valued. He also reiterated to Members that they were being asked to discuss giving consent to the making of the Regulations. He explained that the Structural Changes Order was still being finalised in legal terms, but that he had received assurances that the substance of the Order would be as set out in the Secretary of State's letter attached to the supplementary report.

Cabinet raised and discussed the following points:

- It had been a long process to get to the current position and residents and businesses wanted developments to proceed.
- Members urged colleagues to work together to create the best council for the future.
- There had already been the creation of various workstreams and colleagues working across all five councils.
- The need to update and refresh the business case in terms of resources was highlighted and for focus to be put on agreeing the budget for the new authority.
- It created an opportunity to create a new exciting innovative council bringing the best of all five councils together.
- There was disappointed over the agreed number of Councillors being 147 but the Secretary of State had acknowledged the need for a boundary review. Mr Tett stated that the agreed number of Councillors was higher than that stated in the business case and would create an additional members allowances cost of £3m on expenses over a 5 year period.
- Mr Appleyard noted that Members haven't got absolute certainty but have been given serious assurances from Government. In the spirit of avoiding delay, he supported the need for Cabinet to take a minor risk in order to move the process on as quickly as possible.
- Assurances were given to residents that the new authority would go live on 1 April with little impact and services still running effectively.
- Residents remained at the heart of the changes and the new authority would provide a single point of contact.
- Reassurances that decision making would be local e.g. planning and the opportunity for further devolution of services to those parish councils that wanted to.
- The creation of hubs would make it easier for residents to stay in touch and gain information.

Mr Tett summarised by saying that the creation of the new council was about residents and outcomes for the people Councillors were elected to serve. It would create a strong voice nationally, make things simpler, better value and remove duplication. There would be more local working including local hubs, local planning and more devolution for those councils that wanted it. Mr Tett urged districts colleagues to work with county colleagues and for the focus to be on residents in order to get the new council implemented and delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The supplementary report set out the following recommendations:

- 1. In line with the main report Unitary Transition Arrangements Cabinet is recommended to confirm that the County Council gives consent to the making of the Regulations. This consent is on the basis of the Secretary of State's decision on the draft Structural Changes Order as set out in the letter at Appendix 2 and detailed in the table at paragraph 1.**
- 2. Cabinet is also recommended to delegate to the Leader responsibility for appointing the County Council's nominees to the Shadow Executive.**

RESOLVED: Cabinet AGREED the recommendations.

4 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

4 February 2019

**MARTIN TETT
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**