

## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council convened and held on Thursday 16 July 2015 in The Oculus, AVDC, Gatehouse Way, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 9.30 am and concluding at 11.58 am.

### **PRESENT**

Mr W Chapple OBE in the Chair;

Mr C Adams, Mr M Appleyard, Mrs M Aston, Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mrs P Birchley, Ms J Blake, Mr N Brown, Mr A Busby, Mr T Butcher, Mr D Carroll, Mr J Chilver, Mrs A Davies, Mr D Dhillon, Mr C Ditta, Mr T Egleton, Mr C Etholen, Ms N Glover, Mr P Gomm, Lin Hazell, Mr A Huxley, Mr P Irwin, Mr S Lambert, Ms A Macpherson, Mr D Martin, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr R Reed, Mr B Roberts, Mr R Scott, Mr D Shakespeare OBE, Mr M Shaw, Mr A Stevens, Mr R Stuchbury, Mrs J Teesdale, Mr M Tett, Julia Wassell, Mr D Watson and Mr W Whyte

### **DIGNITARIES PRESENT**

Sir H Aubrey-Fletcher, Mrs F Skelton DL, Mrs M Clayton, Mr M Colston, Mr P Lawrence, Mrs G Miscampbell OBE DL and Mr R Pushman

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Adams, Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr P Hardy, Mr D Hayday, Mr R Khan, Mrs V Letheren, Mrs W Mallen, Mr M Phillips, Mr D Schofield, Ms R Vigor-Hedderly, Ms K Wood and Mr B Allen

### **1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

### **2 PETITIONS**

Mr Carroll presented a petition on behalf of Great Kingshill Residents Association signed by 516 residents. The petition was in relation to parking problems and related dangers on Cryers Hill in relation to Great Kingshill School.

Mrs Teasdale presented an e-petition for the reduction of the speed limit to 30mph from the Harleyford turning to the SAS and South Close roundabout near to Danesfield School, Marlow.

Mr Gomm presented a petition signed by 460 people against potential cuts in support teacher services for deaf children.

### **3 COMMUNICATIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Khan, Mrs V Letheren, Mr M Phillips, Mr D Hayday, Ms K Wood, Mrs L Clarke, Mr P Hardy, Mr B Adams, Ms R Vigor-Hedderly, Mr D Schofield, Mrs W Mallen and Alderman Mr B Allen.

The Chairman informed Council of and congratulated the winners of the Buckinghamshire Best Kept Village competition as follows:

Stoke Goldington – best small village

Cuddington – best medium village

Stewkley – best large village

Marlow – best small town and winner with the highest marks of the Sword of Excellence

Haddenham – best larger village

The Chairman thanked all Members attending the successful Armed Forces Day, which attracted over 8,000 people. In particular, the Chairman thanked Mr P Irwin, Mr B Adams and Mr P Gomm who volunteered for the whole day.

The Chairman reported on recent royal visits to the County. The Princess Royal had visited Chalfont Heights on Tuesday 14 July to present certificates to scout volunteers and the Duke of Gloucester had been present at the recent Citizenship Ceremony at Taplow Court.

The Chairman informed Members that the County Council had been given a Silver Award in recognition of the work done on the Armed Forces Covenant and highlighted some of the work done through the agreement. The Chairman thanked all the officers and Members involved.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 CONSTITUTION UPDATES**

Mr R Scott presented the report which proposed updates to the Constitution following legislative changes. Council was assured that the proposed amendments had been closely scrutinised by the Regulatory and Audit Committee.

Mr Scott brought Members' attention to an updated Declarations of Interest form, and a training session on 10 September for all Members focussing on the legal responsibilities of being a Member.

The report was seconded by Mr Watson.

#### **RESOLVED**

**Council agreed the changes to the Constitution recommended by the Regulatory and Audit Committee as set out in the Appendices to the report.**

#### **6 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Mr J Chilver presented the Treasury Management Annual Summary which is a statutory annual report to Council. The report had been reviewed by the Regulatory and Audit Committee.

Mr Watson seconded the report.

## **RESOLVED**

**Council agreed the following:**

- 1. The Treasury Management Annual Report and actual Prudential Indicators for 2014/15**
- 2. Changes to the estimates of capital expenditure within Prudential Indicator 2.1 to £129.979m in 2015/16, £53.053m in 2016/17 and £30.100m in 2017/18**
- 3. Changes to the Capital Financing Requirement within Prudential Indicator 2.2 to £325.887m in 2015/16, £317.505m in 2016/17 and £307.013m in 2017/18**

## **7 ANNUAL PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

Mr M Tett presented the report, which was seconded by Mr M Appleyard.

## **RESOLVED**

**Council agreed the Annual Pay Policy Settlement 2015/16 as recommended by the Senior Appointments and Bucks Pay Award Committee.**

## **8 ANNUAL FOOD & FEED PLAN**

Mrs M Aston presented the report which was seconded by Mr B Roberts.

In response to a question about the Council's role in ensuring people have access to healthy diets and food, Mrs Aston informed Council of the work being done in schools regarding healthy eating and hoped that as a result the next generation would be healthier.

## **RESOLVED**

**Council approved the 2015/16 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan (the FSA Plan).**

## **9 THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

Mr M Tett presented the report and emphasised the opportunity that the Strategic Plan provided for Members in setting the direction for the Council. Mr Tett reminded Members of the additional importance of the document as it would be disseminated throughout the organisation to individuals through the Contribution Based Pay system, through the work of Cabinet Members and through the Medium Term Planning process.

Mr Tett informed Council that it was the intention to review the Plan and report back to Council on progress annually.

The report was seconded by Mr A Busby.

The following points were made by Members:

- The refreshed Strategic Plan was more succinct and a good top-level document.
- Implementation would be key and the opposition would be holding Cabinet to account particularly in terms of prioritisation and budget allocation.
- The high visibility in the Plan given to supporting the most vulnerable was welcomed.
- That for most residents the substantial funding required to provide social care and children's services was not clearly understood.

Mr Tett welcomed the supportive comments.

## **RESOLVED**

**Council agreed the refreshed Strategic Plan for Buckinghamshire County Council as detailed.**

## **10 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT**

Mr D Dhillon reported that the Children's Services & Learning Select Committee was currently securing evidence from partners in relation to its inquiry into child sexual exploitation and that a report would be produced in the autumn. Mr Dhillon thanked Committee Members for their work and Mrs A Davis who had been co-opted on to the Committee for the Inquiry.

Mr D Carroll thanked Mr W Whyte for the work done in his previous role as Chairman of the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee and reported that the Committee was currently undertaking an inquiry into flooding in Buckinghamshire, concluding with a final evidence session on 8 September. Mr Carroll thanked his Committee Members and in particular the residents who were coming forward for the inquiry. In response to a question from Mr R Stuchbury, Mr Carroll assured Council that the Committee would continue scrutinising the work of the Council with vigour.

Mr B Roberts informed Council that his Committee's meeting on the topic of prudential borrowing had now taken place and that the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee would be producing a report in the near future. The Committee's Rent in Advance Inquiry, chaired by Mr S Lambert, was concluding with a report currently being written.

Mrs A Macpherson thanked the members of the Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee for their recent work and in particular their contributions to the 15-minute Domiciliary Care Inquiry. Thanks were given for the support of the Vice Chairman, Mr R Reed, the co-operation from officers from the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care Business Unit, and to Ms K Wager, the Committee's support officer who would soon be leaving.

In response to a question from Mr R Stuchbury, Mrs Macpherson confirmed that mental health issues remained high on the Committee's agenda and liaison would take place with Mrs V Letheren, Chairman of the Children's Social Care & Learning Select Committee regarding scrutiny of children's mental health services. In addition, Mrs Macpherson agreed to circulate information from Oxfordshire on mental health services and regarding Milton Keynes/Buckingham NHS services in relation to emergency care, once received.

## **11 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS**

### **11a. Report of the Leader of the Council**

The Leader informed Council that he was now Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board, a key means of delivering policy across District Council and NHS partners in Buckinghamshire.

In relation to national budget announcements, Mr Tett informed Members that the new living wage was a concern to local authorities with a potential impact on services for the most vulnerable, including the potential contraction of the care market. Council heard that the Local Government Association was undertaking work with local authorities to quantify the impact and would be making Government aware of the results.

It was noted that future funding for local government had not been included in the budget but that there would be a Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn which would significantly impact on the budget and Medium Term Plan.

Mr Tett expressed his disappointment in the lack of reference to devolution or the South East in the budget speech and reiterated the importance of continuing to lobby Government to recognise the importance of the South East to the country's economy.

In response to a question regarding whether the budget had made it more difficult for young people, Mr Tett reiterated his view that the Government was aiming to ensure the country had a successful economy based on the private sector and that people aspired to success rather than developing a reliance on benefits.

In relation to the issue of Cabinet Member decisions in the Council agenda and papers, it was agreed that these would be included in future.

The importance of good co-ordination between Cabinet Members to deliver the Strategic Plan was raised, particularly in relation to improving the health of residents. Mr Tett assured Council that co-ordination would take place not just with Cabinet Members but across partners to ensure better delivery of services to residents.

In relation to high speed broadband, Mr Tett confirmed that the current programme was fully funded to deliver to 90% of homes by March 2016. Council heard that work was taking place with District Councils to fund the extension programme, which would be managed, but not funded, by the County Council. The Leader offered to meet with Mr Lambert to discuss specific concerns.

The Leader, the Council's officer team and residents were thanked for their work and commitment in relation to HS2.

The issue of housing and employment growth was raised. It was acknowledged that employment and leisure opportunities need be provided alongside housing to avoid the creation of dormitories.

### **11b. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing**

Mr M Appleyard clarified that the 6 Opportunities Centres in operation or planned were in Aylesbury, Buckingham, Chesham, Burnham, Beaconsfield and Wycombe.

The response to Mr R Stuchbury's written questions was discussed (attached) and concerns about future funding of adult social care raised. Mr Appleyard confirmed that he would be continuing to lobby politicians to ensure the issue is addressed and locally would be working to improve lives, embracing new approaches where this delivered better results.

In relation to Stroke Rehabilitation services, Mr Appleyard confirmed that a response would be circulated to all Members shortly.

#### **11c. Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Mr Z Mohammed informed Council that work on Furzedown School was close to completion.

In relation to increasing education standards, Council was told that work with the Bucks Learning Trust would continue to ensure improvements were sustained. Further information was requested in future to clarify the proportion of Upper School pupils in good or outstanding schools.

In response to a question regarding the provision of hot school meals across the county, Mr Mohammed confirmed that an officer was working in this area.

Concerns were raised in relation to a letter sent from a school to parents in relation to the celebration of Eid. Although only aware of the situation on the morning of Council and not having fully read the letter, Mr Mohammed confirmed his understanding of the allocations set out in the letter.

Clarification was sought in relation to the increase in SEND (pupils with special educational needs or disabilities) between March 2014 and 2015. Mr Mohammed confirmed that the information would be provided after the meeting.

In relation to Children's Centres, Mr Mohammed assured Council that no Centres would be closed as a result of the recent retendering. Centres were being reorganised into clusters and it was acknowledged that Centres were often good community hubs.

A question was raised about the need for improved communication with parents regarding school administration. Mr Mohammed confirmed that he would consider this issue with his officers.

Mr B Bendyshe-Brown thanked Mr B Harrison of Connexions for all his work and wished him luck for his new role as Chief Executive of the UTC in Aylesbury. Mr Mohammed added his congratulations and support to Mr Harrison.

#### **11d. Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment**

Mr W Whyte brought Council's attention to following:

- The national festival of archaeology and the local events taking place.
- That the Energy Strategy for Buckinghamshire was being considered by Cabinet on 20 July.
- The Council had been successful in securing a DEFRA Repair and Renew Grant for a mountable temporary flood barrier system for the Willows in Aylesbury and a demonstration launch was planned for the autumn.

- The Marlow flood alleviation scheme and flood management plans were commencing.
- The start of calvert work in London Road, Buckingham; and
- An officer team was being established to deliver the Council's new Sustainable Urban Drainage duty in relation to proposed developments.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- The need to ensure our carbon emissions were reduced.
- The success of Bishopstone and the Chesham Pathfinder projects in taking action locally to avoid future flooding.
- The preference for solar rather than windfarms in Buckinghamshire.
- The London Road Waste Transfer Station decision and the importance of all residents taking responsibility for the waste produced in the County.

#### **11e. Cabinet Member for Resources**

Mr J Chilver explained that social worker numbers related to permanent employees and that the net figure was 14, with 52 people in the process of recruitment.

In response to Member questions, Mr Chilver confirmed:

- Recent IT failures were in relation to external hosting and have now been resolved by the provider.
- A feasibility study will be undertaken at some point to consider lift replacements for County Hall.
- The Council has taken over the management of the Social Club and options are being looked at.
- The Council's Property Asset Management Plan is being reviewed and will provide a basis for evaluating best use of the authority's assets.
- That the Council has a Wellbeing Strategy for its workforce.
- The Council has an important role to play in maintaining dialogue with Government regarding funding, particularly at present in relation to the Care Act.

#### **11f. Cabinet Member for Children's Services**

In response to questions regarding social work recruitment, Ms L Hazell confirmed that a recruitment drive had been undertaken in Romania particularly because of similar social work practice in the country and interlinks with the current workforce. Council was told that social workers from outside the UK undertook at 2-week induction and that the 'golden handcuffs' package for new staff was being rolled out. In addition, work is continuing to train social workers locally through links with the University in Wycombe.

Ms Hazell confirmed Members would receive a circular in relation to the outcome of the current Old Bailey trial.

In relation to the speed of improvement in Children's Services, Ms Hazell reported that the improvement programme would take 18 months to two years.

#### **11g. Cabinet Member for Transportation**

Mr M Shaw thanked Mrs P Birchley and Mrs A Davies for their recent electoral visits and the three Depots in Buckinghamshire which were visited with the Deputy Cabinet Member, Mr P Irwin.

In relation to a question about East-West Rail, Mr Shaw assured Mrs Blake that clarity would be sought about the potential electrification of the line.

Responding to a question from Mr R Stuchbury, Mr Shaw reported that the developers responsible for the Buckingham roundabout scheme were now threatened with the revocation of their bond. The Council would wait for a response by the end of July.

Mr Shaw assured Council that work was taking place to address issues including poor sequencing of works, changing computer systems and reinstatement of discussions regarding future street lighting improvements.

Mr Shaw informed Members that Council was exploring value for money in its road maintenance programme by tendering £10m of the £25m budget to other companies (not Ringway Jacobs). Works would be evaluated according to cost, quality of work and materials used and the programme should start in September 2015.

**11g. Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health**

Mrs M Aston, Deputy Cabinet Member, assured Mr T Butcher that he would receive a response in relation to concerns regarding changes in library opening hours.

**12 NOTICES OF MOTION**

There were no Notices of Motion.

**CHAIRMAN**