

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council convened and held on Thursday 17 September 2015 in The Oculus, AVDC, Gatehouse Way, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 9.30 am and concluding at 12.35 pm.

PRESENT

Mr W Chapple OBE in the Chair;

Mr B Adams, Mr C Adams, Mr M Appleyard, Mrs M Aston, Mr N Brown, Mr A Busby, Mr T Butcher, Mr J Chilver, Mrs A Davies, Mr D Dhillon, Mr C Ditta, Mr T Egleton, Ms N Glover, Mr P Gomm, Mr D Hayday, Lin Hazell, Mr A Huxley, Mr P Irwin, Mr R Khan, Mr S Lambert, Mrs V Letheren, Ms A Macpherson, Mrs W Mallen, Mr D Martin, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr M Phillips, Mr R Reed, Mr B Roberts, Mr M Shaw, Mr R Stuchbury, Mrs J Teesdale, Mr M Tett, Ms R Vigor-Hedderly, Julia Wassell, Mr W Whyte and Ms K Wood

DIGNITARIES AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sir H Aubrey-Fletcher, Mr B Allen, Mrs G Miscampbell OBE DL, Mr R Pushman and Mr J Thelwell (Chief Fire Officer, Bucks & Milton Keynes Fire Authority)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mrs P Birchley, Ms J Blake, Mr D Carroll, Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr C Etholen, Mr P Hardy, Mr D Schofield, Mr R Scott, Mr D Shakespeare OBE, Mr A Stevens, Mr D Watson, Mrs F Skelton DL, Mrs M Clayton, Mr M Colston and Mr P Lawrence

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of Council on 16 July were agreed as a correct record.

2 PETITIONS

Mr P Irwin confirmed that the petition he was expecting to present was already being dealt with by the Council.

3 COMMUNICATIONS

A minute's silence was held for former Councillor Henry Powell-Shedden who had died recently. Mr Powell-Shedden had been an Elected Member on the County Council from 1976 to 1993.

Apologies for the meeting were received from Mr Bendyshe-Brown, Mrs Birchley, Mrs Blake, Mr Carroll, Mrs Clarke, Mr Etholen, Mr Hardy, Mr Schofield, Mr Scott, Mr Shakespeare, Mr Stevens, Mr Watson, the High Sheriff Mrs Skelton and Aldermen Mr Lawrence and Mr Colston.

The Chairman, Mr B Chapple, reported that the Bucks County Show had been well attended with over 1,000 people passing through the County Council's tent. Mr Chapple extended his thanks to the Members who had attended.

Mr Chapple informed the meeting of the service held at St Mary's Church in celebration of the Queen becoming the country's longest reigning monarch.

The Chairman brought Members' attention to the campaign to secure funding pledges in anticipation of a bid to purchase the hoard of coins found at Lenborough in 2014.

Mr P Gomm highlighted the successful Active Bucks Day held in Waddesdon on 12 September and extended his thanks to Mr P Irwin for organising the event.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5 REPORT OF THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY

Mr J Thelwell, Chief Fire Officer and Mr A Busby as Chairman of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority were welcomed to the meeting.

Mr Busby introduced the presentation highlighting the progress the Authority had made in its transformation process and thanking Mr Thelwell and his staff for the service provided during the past year.

Mr Busby informed Members that staff had embraced the changes within the Authority and were now looking to expand their role within the community. Mr Busby reported that collaboration was happening both across borders to share best practice and learning, and with the Police to explore sharing of facilities. The Council heard that the Authority had hosted recent visits from antipodean fire authorities, who had been particularly interested in the involvement of Elected Members, and from Civil Servants from Central Government, who were interested in the Authority's transition.

Mr Thelwell presented his report (available on the Council's website), highlighting continuing developments in relation to workforce and sites; the role of the Authority going forward; finances and the importance of Member involvement in challenge; collaboration with the Police; and data sharing across the public sector.

In response to questions, Mr Thelwell stated that:

- The national terms and conditions were restrictive whereas local terms & conditions could enable the Authority to develop an extended range of services, cover a greater range of skills and flexibility in pay;
- All fires were investigated and the Authority would contact the Police if a spate of fires occurred;
- There were no plans to close the Fire Station in High Wycombe although ideas for better premises would be welcomed;
- The Authority was keen to diversify its workforce and apprenticeships offered this potential;
- The planned housing growth in Bucks and Milton Keynes would not

automatically require an increase in service provision as the number of fires was not necessarily linked to numbers of houses;

- The numbers of car accidents had been increasing nationally over the past 30 years and the Service was continuing its prevention work in this area. To Mr Thelwell's knowledge, no Authorities had claimed for costs against insurers.

The exemplary work of staff, and in particular Buckingham Fire Station staff, was acknowledged.

6 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

Mrs V Letheren, Chairman of the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee, informed Council of the continued work of the Committee on scrutinising the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan and of the Committee's recent training from the Local Government Association, which was recommended to other Select Committees. The Council was told of the value of the Committee's recent visit to Birmingham City Council.

Mrs Letheren thanked Members involved in the Committee's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation and the supporting Committee Adviser, Mr R Bowman, for their work during the summer. Thanks were also extended to those who had provided evidence and information for the Committee. The Council was told that the Committee would be reporting its findings in November.

Mr B Roberts, Chairman of the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee, highlighted the Committee's next meeting on 29 September.

Mrs A Macpherson, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee, thanked Members involved for their work on the recently concluded 15-minute Care Visits Inquiry and informed Council of the Committee's next Inquiry into adults with disabilities.

In response to questions, Mrs Macpherson confirmed that the report on 15-minute Care Visits had taken Members' concerns into account and that recommendations had been made to ensure regular audit of Care Plans and spot checks on care packages. Mrs Macpherson also reported that the Select Committee agreed with the value of 15-minute visits in some care packages, subject to implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

In relation to NHS future plans for hospital services, in particular Milton Keynes Hospital, Mrs Macpherson confirmed to Members that work was continuing to acquire information from the Trust.

Mr B Chapple informed Council of the full day evidence session on Flooding held recently by the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee. The Inquiry would be reporting later in the autumn. The issue of the poor response by water authorities at the time of flooding was raised.

Mr P Gomm highlighted the fact that the Committee was also looking at the issue of legal highs.

7 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS AND QUESTIONS

7a. Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Mr M Tett, informed Members of the progress of the strategic alliance with Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire and the positive response from Milton Keynes and the three Bedfordshire authorities who had requested to join work on the local transport stream. The Council was told of the powerful position that the Alliance created across the centre of the country.

In response to questions, Mr Tett confirmed that he would ensure the Alliance's transport strategy was available on the website and highlighted that the work taking place to create unity of local transport authorities would make it easier to deliver area improvements such as the Oxford to Cambridge expressway and East-West rail.

Mr Tett also highlighted the issue of safeguarding children and young people and reminded Members of the importance of their duty in relation to Corporate Parenting. In response to a question on Operation Articulate, Mr Tett confirmed that both he and the Cabinet Member for Children's Services had made public apologies.

In response to a question about the Syrian refugee crisis, Mr Tett informed Members that he had made recent statements both on television and on radio supporting the Government's stance, whilst raising awareness of the likely demand for additional services other than housing. Mr Tett told Council of the importance of ensuring Government provision of full and ongoing funding to cover the whole service package required for as long as it was needed. Mr Tett welcomed the work of local charities and the offers of support from individuals in the area, confirming that such offers received by the Council were redirected to the appropriate charities.

The issue of clarity of responsibility for services in the local area was raised. Mr Tett confirmed that authorities have an important role together in representing the public and that the scrutiny process provides a robust challenge to services.

The issue of attendance at Council meetings was raised and the importance of Members attending meetings was reiterated.

In relation to questions on broadband, Mr Tett restated that the project was on track to deliver high speed broadband coverage across 90% of premises in Buckinghamshire. Mr Tett informed Members that if takeup of high speed broadband exceeded targets, BT would provide additional funding which would be used to extend the programme. Mr Tett also confirmed that Members' specific concerns, for example in relation to areas of Chalfont St Giles and Fairford Leys in Aylesbury, would be looked into and where possible, included in future improvements.

In relation to HS2 and a proposal by the District Council for an additional haul road through his division, Mr Tett noted that officers from the County Council had provided a briefing and confirmed that any additional information needed would be provided to Mr Lambert.

7b. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Mr M Appleyard highlighted the financial challenges facing adult social care services including the potential impact of the living wage legislation. In relation to a question about lobbying, Mr Appleyard confirmed that in addition to lobbying of local MPs, the

issue of funding social care was key for both the Local Government Association and the County Council's Network. Mr Appleyard reported that he was working to improve the data available to develop the strongest case for increased funding.

The importance of active lives was raised and the Active Bucks event held recently in Waddesdon was highlighted as a good example of Council activity in this area.

7c. Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health

Mr M Phillips brought Council's attention to a Legal Highs event on 12 November.

The question of devolution offers in the non-parished area of High Wycombe was raised and Mr Phillips welcomed all to the Town and Parish conference on 25 November.

In relation to libraries, Mr Phillips reiterated that the Council was not planning the privatisation of libraries and that discussions were at an early stage, taking place to establish options for libraries into the future. Mr Phillips confirmed that community partners would be invited to join the discussions. Mr Mohammed reported on the recent successful community library launch in Castlefield, High Wycombe, thanking the Cabinet Member and officers involved. Responding to a question about Buckingham Library, Mr Phillips confirmed that roofing work would start in about a month's time.

Mr P Irwin expressed his thanks to the following for a successful Active Bucks day in Waddesdon: the County Council's Public Health and Localities teams, Waddesdon Cricket Club, Aylesbury Vale District Council, Paul Hodson, Gemma Denmark, Kyle Banks, Di Farmer, Mr P Gomm, the Council's events, communications and democratic services officers, Transport for Bucks and Waddesdon School.

It was noted that publicity of Active Bucks in some areas was an issue and Members were encouraged to sign up for Active Bucks alerts.

In response to a question about the Local Area Forum review, Mr Phillips confirmed that it was almost complete and that Members would be informed when it was finished. Mr Phillips also confirmed that the Active Bucks project was being delivered through Local Area Forums with each having a budget to spend on their local area.

7d. Cabinet Member for Transportation

Mr M Shaw thanked Mrs L Clarke for the tour of her electoral division and wished her a speedy recovery from her recent operation. Mr Shaw highlighted to Members two road safety campaigns being reported on local television news: the first focussed on supporting mature drivers and Mr Shaw thanked June Howlett and the Chairman of the Princes Risborough Community Association for their involvement. Mr Shaw reported that the second campaign was around ensuring responsible drinking during the rugby world cup.

Mr Shaw also brought Members' attention to the fact that seven young people had started as apprentices in Transport for Bucks.

In response to questions asked, Mr Shaw provided the following responses:

- The Council was waiting for a further response from developers in relation to addressing the Buckingham roundabout issues and once agreed improvements

- would be made as a matter of urgency;
- Transport for Bucks was being pressed to ensure works were being finished properly, including painting of lines;
 - All Members were encouraged to report the location of temporary signs which are no longer needed;
 - A holistic consideration of Category 1 potholes was being planned to ensure defects in the surrounding area were also addressed, and an asset management approach and secure plane & patch programme were also being considered;
 - Officers would be asked to look into the road safety, truck dumping and road adoption issues raised by Julia Wassell;
 - As a member of the Strategic Transport Forum Board, Mr Shaw would keep Members informed of work in this area;
 - Improvements to the customer service inquiry system were being made;
 - The new Local Area Technician in Mr S Lambert's area would be given as much support as possible to address the work programme;
 - The value of road safety programmes was acknowledged;
 - In relation to delivery dates not being adhered to, contractors were held to account as it was important for local people to receive the best service;
 - The provision of £1.75m funding to deliver a cycleway between Buckingham and Winslow was good news and timings for the provision of associated real-time information for bus stops and the wifi hub would be investigated further.

7e. Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Ms L Hazell updated Council with the sentencing terms handed out in relation to Operation Articulate and the awareness raising work being carried out with parents, carers and the community across Buckinghamshire. Ms Hazell also welcomed the new staff who had recently joined the service.

The need for additional information in relation to the social work workforce was raised and acknowledged.

7f. Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Mr P Gomm congratulated the Cabinet Member, Mr Z Mohammed, for the smooth transition of Children's Centres. Mr Mohammed reported that teething issues in some areas were being worked on.

In relation to school planning, Mr Mohammed confirmed that modelling for provision was undertaken, particularly around planned developments, and a sufficiency report was produced on an annual basis.

A question was raised about cases where children were not in school due to non-allocation of places or other circumstances. Mr Mohammed reported that he was aware of a few issues mostly resolved and would look into any cases forwarded to him.

Concerns were raised that despite a long local campaign, St Mary's School, Aylesbury had not provided the capacity needed. Mr Mohammed confirmed that a whole area approach was taken based on area plans as although one school might be full, another may have spaces. Mr Mohammed advised that the service also looked at planning applications and confirmed that he would be happy to consider any particular issues.

The issue of the secondary academy in Stoke Poges was raised and Mr T Egleton

confirmed that he would submit a written question on the matter to the Cabinet Member.

7g. Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment

Mr W Whyte brought Member's attention to the community launch of flood defences for the Willows Estate in Aylesbury, and to the launch of the second energy switching programme for Buckinghamshire residents. Mr Whyte also thanked the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee for its work on flooding.

The issue of the need for the London Road Waste Transfer station was raised and Mr Whyte confirmed that it was part of the model for the Energy from Waste project, but would be discussed with the officer team.

Mr P Gomm was asked to write to Mr Whyte regarding the issue of environmental concerns in relation to land in Bierton.

Mr S Lambert expressed his thanks to the Cabinet Member and officers of the Council's flooding team for their support at the Willows in Aylesbury.

Mr Whyte reported that services would be considering how best to support businesses and residents in relation to energy sustainability in the light of the Government's decision to stop its Green Deal offer. Mr Whyte confirmed that work would continue on the Council's own property to improve energy efficiency.

The delivery of the solenoid barriers along the M40 was welcomed and the work of Wycombe District Council, Mr Ken Evans and Mr Charles Meakins were particularly noted.

Alderman Mr R Pushman was thanked for his work on securing Quarrendon Leas through the conservation trust.

7h. Cabinet Member for Resources

Mr J Chilver drew the Council's attention to the authority's new digital customer platform which included 'my account' functionality.

In response to a question regarding social work workforce figures, Mr Chilver confirmed that the net figure for staff would be included in each report in future.

In relation to the Social Club facility in Aylesbury, Mr Chilver reported that the facilities team who had taken over management of the facility were considering plans for improvement.

The issue of governance of service delivery units developed under the Council's Future Shape programme was raised and Mr Chilver assured Members that appropriate project governance was in place.

In relation to the former Red Cross day care centre in Buckingham, Mr Chilver confirmed that although concept of shared use with the Town Council and Parish Church was agreed, discussions were still taking place.

8 NOTICES OF MOTION

The Notice of Motion proposed in the agenda was withdrawn.

9 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN - INFORMATION ONLY

10 NEXT MEETING

19 November 2015 at 9.30am.

CHAIRMAN