

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council convened and held on Thursday 24 November 2016 in The Oculus, AVDC Offices, Gatehouse Way, Aylesbury, commencing at 9.45 am and concluding at 12.46 pm.

PRESENT

Mrs V Letheren in the Chair;

Mr B Adams, 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 W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Mrs L Clarke OBE, 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, Ms A Macpherson, Mrs W Mallen, Mr D Martin, Mr Z Mohammed, Mr R Reed, Mr B Roberts, Mr R Scott, Mr D Shakespeare OBE, Mr M Shaw, Mr R Stuchbury, Mrs J Teesdale, Mr M Tett, Julia Wassell, Mr D Watson and Mr W Whyte

DIGNITARIES AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sir H Aubrey-Fletcher, Mrs M Clayton, Mr M Colston, Mr P Lawrence, Mrs G Miscampbell OBE DL, Mr R Pushman, Mr F Habgood, Mr A Stansfeld and Miss A Bahl

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr C Etholen, Mr P Hardy, Mr M Phillips, Mr D Schofield, Mr A Stevens, Ms K Wood and Mrs M Soames DL

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

2 PETITIONS

There were none.

3 COMMUNICATIONS

Apologies were received from Mr C Etholen, Mr P Hardy, Mr M Phillips, Mr D Schofield, Mr A Stevens, Miss K Wood and Mrs M Soames DL.

Apologies were also received from Mr T Boyd, Managing Director of the Communities and Adult Social Care Business Unit. The Chairman reported that Mr Boyd would be retiring from Buckinghamshire County Council after 14 years and Members congratulated him on his outstanding work.

The Chairman reported on events attended since the last Council meeting – a full list is

attached at Appendix 1.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5 YOUTH DEMOCRACY

Ms Aarushi Bahl, Member of the UK Youth Parliament was welcomed to the meeting. Ms Bahl explained as a 17 years old in Sixth Form, she was the Youth Parliament representative for young people in South Bucks. Ms Bahl informed Members that she had visited the County Council on 18th November for Youth Takeover Day and had met with Mrs Margaret Aston and Mr David Watson.

Ms Bahl reported that she had recently attended the Houses of Parliament, where the Youth Parliament met to agree the focus of their campaigns for the coming year. Following a debate in Parliament, Ms Bahl explained that the UK Youth Parliament had chosen 'Vote 16' and 'A Curriculum to Prepare Us for Life', as their campaign issues.

Ms Bahl highlighted that Youth Voice in Buckinghamshire was open to any young person and that previous debates had included issues such as disability, skills for life and bullying. Council was told that a bullying panel made up of children, parents and Councillors was held which then led to bullying workshops for parents and children being run by the Safeguarding Board. Ms Bahl emphasised that Youth Voice was focused on bringing about action. Ms Bahl thanked Members for their support and advised that there would be a Cyber Safety and Social Media event held in Wycombe on 18th January 2017.

In response to questions from Members, Ms Bahl made the following points were noted:

- Ms Bahl had been excited to visit the Houses of Parliament and felt honoured to have debated there. It was important to encourage young people to get involved in politics and political education should form part of the Curriculum for Life.
- The UK Youth Parliament was campaigning for Vote 16 as they believed that young people should be able to participate in elections. This had been trialled successfully in Scotland for the Scottish Independence Referendum. Ms Bahl believed that Education was key and it was important for politics to be interesting and relevant.

Ms Bahl was thanked for attending the meeting and Members congratulated her on the confident way she had addressed them and answered their questions.

6 ANNUAL PRESENTATION FROM THE THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER AND THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

Mr Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Chief Constable Francis Habgood were welcomed to the meeting. The PCC began by presenting an overview of issues for PCCs and the wider area. The following main points were noted:

- The second PCC elections held on 5th May 2016 had a larger turnout and

resulted in a number of changes. Conservative PCCs increased from 15 to 20, Labour increased from 12 to 15, Independents decreased from 11 to 3 and Plaid Cymru won all the rural areas in Wales.

- Following the European Referendum, the political team in Central Government had changed. Amber Rudd was now Home Secretary, supported by Brandon Lewis as the Police Minister.
- Police budgets had been significantly cut. The Funding Formula was still being reviewed and the PCC hoped that this might lead to a fairer distribution of the national budget. Currently Thames Valley Police received £159 per head of population, compared to £200 per head in Manchester and £185 in Birmingham. Thames Valley was only slightly smaller in terms of population yet covered a wider geographical area and faced similar issues in its larger urban centres.
- The PCC advocated a transformation of Special Capabilities as smaller forces struggled to deal with homicide, counter terrorism and serious organised crime activities etc. The PCC was a member of a Board considering how Special Capabilities could be better organised in future.
- Fire and Rescue services could now fall under the remit of the PCC. Mr Stansfeld expressed the view that while he was in no hurry to take over the areas three Fire Authorities, he would move to combine them as it made sense financially and operationally.
- A new five year plan had been developed by the PCC and his staff which had been out for consultation and would be considered by the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel in the New Year.

The Chief Constable gave a presentation on the Thames Valley Police commitments which had been launched in the Summer and local policing priorities and the following main points were noted:

- With public services shrinking, it was vital to work closely with the public to promote community resilience and personal responsibility, giving people the skills to take care of themselves within their community.
- The Police remained an emergency service and would respond in an emergency or would liaise with Fire and Ambulance colleagues or other law enforcement agencies to ensure the most appropriate response.
- The Chief Constable emphasised his commitment to neighbourhood policing, advising that each community would have a named contact for their area. In addition, the Police would work with partners in multi-agency problem solving.
- The Chief Constable was committed to recruiting good quality people who reflect the diversity of their community and equipping them with technology to enable communication on the move. The majority of enquiries for the police still come via the telephone, either 999 or 111, but online contact opportunities were being developed.
- There had been an increase in cross border crime so sharing intelligence across forces was important. Violent crimes had also increased in Thames Valley, although this reflected the national trend and was perhaps attributable to changes in recording rules, with even low level violence now having to be recorded. Acquisitive crime had reduced, with the exception of shoplifting and sex offences had increased year on year, but this was due to people having more confidence in reporting such crimes.
- Overall Buckinghamshire remained a very safe place to live and work. The Chief Constable outlined different policing activities in each district area, including on street triage with mental health colleagues, Hotel Watch initiative and the Day of the Girl event. On a county wide level, the Swan Unit

established to offer multi-agency support to victims of Child Sexual Exploitation was working well and Thames Valley Police were already working closely with colleagues in the Fire and Rescue service.

The Chairman thanked the PCC and the Chief Constable for their presentation and invited Member's questions. The following main points were noted:

- In response to questions about the appointment of his Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, the PCC advised that although he was not against appointing a woman, on this occasion it would be a man. This was a political appointment, which was in the gift of the PCC.
- In response to concerns about speeding and why speeding enforcement was not given a higher priority the PCC explained that speeding remained a priority, although it was one of many key issues and Thames Valley Police still spend considerable time and money on speed enforcement. The Chief Constable also explained that in areas where there was a proven speeding problem, the Police would investigate to see how enforcement, education and engineering might be used to combat speeding.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had improved over the past three years, despite facing financial cuts. The CPS was now prosecuting cases which would previously not have been pursued, such as historical child abuse cases and often convictions in such cases were low. It was noted that digitalisation of police systems would also have benefits for court proceedings.
- The PCC was committed to restorative justice programmes and had a budget to do this, although he believed that first time offenders should be the main focus of such programmes.
- Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service was recognised as being one of the most efficient in the country, but there would be advantages of integrating more closely with the Police.
- A Member asked for reassurance, following the recent reporting of the murders of four young men by Stephen Port, where the Police had missed opportunities to connect the murders, that violent crimes against the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community (LGBT) would be properly investigated. The Chief Constable advised that learning from that case would be shared. Thames Valley Police had run a campaign to highlight Hate Crime and to encourage people to report it. All such cases were subject to additional internal scrutiny and there was also an independent advisory group which tracked the progress of such cases.
- The number of full time police federation representatives were set out in regulations and Thames Valley Police currently had five. They were elected by members and most were Constables or Sergeants.

The Chairman thanked the PCC and the Chief Constable for attending the meeting.

7 APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER

The Chief Executive introduced this item and asked Council to agree the appointment of the Returning Officer.

RESOLVED

The Council AGREED to:

- 1. Appoint Mrs Gillian Quinton as Returning Officer with immediate effect, and**
- 2. To indemnify and keep indemnified the Returning Officer against all costs, expenses, actions, charges, claims, damages, proceedings, and other liabilities sustained in or about the proper execution of their office or otherwise in relation thereto (provided that this indemnity shall not affect the liability of the Returning Officer for the consequence of any criminal action or act of wilful default on their part).**

8 EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS

Mr D Martin, Chairman of the Regulatory and Audit Committee introduced the item, highlighting the key points of the report.

RESOLVED

The Council AGREED to accept the offer from Public Sector Audit Appointments to carry out the procurement of external audit arrangements on behalf of Buckinghamshire County Council from 2018/19 onwards.

9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT

Mr D Watson, Deputy Cabinet Member for Resources introduced the report.

RESOLVED

The Council AGREED:

- 1. The Treasury Management Update Report and the Prudential Indicators for 2016/17 to 2019/20.**
- 2. A change to the authorised boundary for external debt within Prudential Indicator 3.2 from £250m to £275m in 2016/17.**
- 3. A change to the MRP policy from a reducing balance basis to a straight line basis over 50 years from 1 April 2016.**

10 SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Select Committee Chairmen presented their reports to Council.

Mr B Chapple, Chairman of the Finance, Performance and Resources Select Committee advised that Budget Scrutiny would take place in the Large Dining Room, Judges Lodgings in the New Year and members of the public would be invited to tweet in their questions. At their September meeting, the Committee had received an interesting report on the new Apprenticeship Levy which he recommended to other Members. The slides could be viewed on the 1st November agenda papers.

Mr B Roberts, Chairman of the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee reported that NHS funding was the focus of their agenda and thanked Mrs L Wheaton, Committee and Governance Adviser for all her work in support of the Committee. In response to Members' questions about the NHS Sustainability and Transformation

Plan (STP), Mr Roberts explained that he shared concerns about the level of savings being discussed but it was not possible to comment on the plan until it had been published. Mr Roberts informed Council that NHS colleagues had been invited to the Committee's 24th January meeting to discuss the STP in more detail.

Mr D Dhillon, Chairman of the Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee thanked Members for their work on the Voice of the Child Inquiry which would be presented to Cabinet shortly. Mr Dhillon advised that an update on Narrowing the Gap would be considered at the Committee's December meeting.

Mr D Carroll, Chairman of the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee thanked Mrs K Sutherland, Committee and Governance Adviser for her work in supporting the Committee since April 2015. He reported that two key issues would be discussed at the Committee's January 2017 meeting, namely proposals for the future of the library service and Growth in Buckinghamshire.

11 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

11a. Leader

Mr M Tett highlighted four items from the Chancellor's Autumn Statement:

- £1billion for Broadband - As some areas of the County remained without Broadband, Mr Tett was investigating how this additional funding would be allocated.
- The large allocation for housing included some funding for housing infrastructure. Mr Tett had asked officers to identify schemes combining both housing and infrastructure.
- £100million had been allocated for East/West Rail. Mr Tett welcomed this, but believed that more money would be needed and ideally he would like to see the project completed before the mid-2020s.
- Mr Tett also welcomed the news that £27million would be invested in feasibility and design work for an East/West Expressway to improve road links between Oxford and Cambridge.

In response to Members' questions and comments, Mr Tett made the following points:

- County Council staff were thanked for attending meetings with Parish Councils to explain the detail of the Modernising Local Government proposals.
- Cabinet received quarterly updates on the Council's budget position and holding contingencies to cover risks was a normal budgeting procedure. Currently it was envisaged that the overspend in Children's Services could be covered by those contingencies.
- Mr Tett shared concerns about the impact of HS2 construction traffic on congestion in and around Aylesbury. Officers were trying to predict the impact of HGV and worker movements. The County Council would approve routing and had identified key junctions which would require improvements to promote free traffic flow. Mr Tett had raised the issue of traffic congestion in the House of Commons and the House of Lords but the County Council had limited control over it.
- Mr Tett continued to lobby Government on the need to increase the Adult Social Care budget.
- The issue of establishing a Town Council for High Wycombe needed to be addressed with Wycombe District Council.

- Although the Prime Minister had reviewed the decision to build a new power station at Hinckley Point, the Government was unlikely to reverse its decision on HS2 when the Bill had almost reached the Royal Assent stage. Mr Tett had been steadfast in his opposition to the project over the past seven years but his focus now was on securing mitigation.

11b. Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Mr M Appleyard made the following responses to Members' questions:

- The Council had a dedicated Prevention team, particularly focussing on social isolation and loneliness. Members were asked to support the officers in their areas in making contact with community groups such as the Women's Institute, Lunch Clubs etc. who could assist.
- In response to a comment about the Government allocating money for new Grammar schools, but no additional funds for Adult Social Care, Mr Appleyard advised that he would not take money from the Education or Children's budgets, but was looking at delivering services differently in order to achieve a balanced budget. This year the Health and Wellbeing portfolio should achieve a balanced budget and next year a small underspend was forecast.

11c. Resources

Mr J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Resources made the following responses to Members' questions:

- Opportunities to digitalise Member's payslips were being investigated.
- No trades unions had rent free accommodation at County Hall.
- That he would discuss the decision for Members to use the MAAS360 email system with officers and respond to the Member after the meeting.

11d. Transportation

Mr M Shaw, Cabinet Member for Transportation reported that Marlow Bridge would be re-opening on 25th November and thanked the staff of Transport for Buckinghamshire and the local Member, Mr R Scott for their hard work. Mr Shaw also apologised for the congestion on the roads in Aylesbury that morning, which had been caused by emergency utility works to repair a burst water main.

In response to Members' questions the following main points were noted:

- The Council's thoughts and sympathies were with the family of the lady who had recently been killed on a railway crossing in Aylesbury. This occurred on railway land, but the Council had erected barriers to prevent the pedestrian railway crossing being used.
- The local Member for Marlow thanked the Cabinet Member and all staff who had worked to ensure that Marlow Bridge was safe to reopen. The timing of this would be welcomed by retailers in the town, who could now benefit from the pre-Christmas trade.
- Mr Shaw agreed to look into whether more could be done to join up the traffic light sequencing on Marlow Hill and the Handy Cross roundabout.
- The schedule for gully cleaning had been circulated to Members and there would be no further cuts to this service in the next financial year.
- The Council's Parking Vision had been published. This would make parking reviews more streamlined, enable consultations to be more effective and would

- reduce expenditure.
- A fatality had occurred on the A421 near Thornborough and the Cabinet Member was thanked for the way the TfB team had kept the local Member up to date.
- The Depot Manager in Wycombe would be asked to look into issues of flooding on A40 in High Wycombe.
- The possibility of pay and display parking in Stocklake, Aylesbury could be investigated, at the request of residents and businesses.
- The Council would be looking closely at Blue Badge parking applications to ensure that the system was not being abused.
- The Buckingham Transport Study was commended by the local Member.
- There had been issues with the hydraulics in some bollards in Fairford Leys and in Mrs Glover's division. TfB was working to address this problem.
- A meeting would be arranged between the Cabinet Member, S106 Officer and Mr S Lambert to discuss the Fowler Road junction.

11e. Planning and Environment

Mr W Whyte, Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment reported that the next collective Energy Switch would take place in December and asked Members to publicise this to residents. In addition, Members were also asked to promote the Environment Agency Flood Aware service and the Council's own website's Flooding pages to residents.

In response to Members' questions and comments the following main points were noted:

- Members had found the recent trip to the Greatmoor Energy from Waste plant very interesting.
- Prosecutions for fly tipping had continued to increase and it was suggested that the Council should write to local magistrates to ask them to consider increasing their fines to the maximum allowed in order to discourage flytipping.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to meet with the local Member for Aylesbury West to discuss the issue of deploying temporary flood defences.
- A Member was signposted to the District Council regarding a concern about detergents from car washing facilities potentially polluting water courses.

11f. Community Engagement and Public Health

Mrs M Aston, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health reported that a Domestic Violence and Abuse Youth Worker was now funded by the proceeds of crimes received by the Trading Standards service.

In response to Members' questions and comments, the following main points were noted:

- Mrs M Aston would obtain an update on ongoing work to reduce social isolation, following a Member Briefing on Reducing Loneliness which had been held in July.
- An item on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan would be presented at the next Health and Wellbeing Board, which was a public meeting and would be webcast. In addition, a Member Briefing had been organised for January 2017.
- The business case for Libraries would be considered at the Transport,

Environment and Communities Select Committee on 17th January 2017.

11g. Children's Services

Miss L Hazell made the following responses to Members' questions:

- In addition to attracting new staff, the Council was working hard to support and retain existing Social Workers. Since April, 15 agency workers had become permanent staff.

11h. Education

Mr Z Mohammed advised that he had circulated the consultation document on the proposed merger of Aylesbury and Amersham and Wycombe College on email and asked Members to provide their feedback.

In response to Members' questions the following main points were noted:

- The Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership sponsored a team led by the ex-Vice Chancellor of Bucks New University, who foster links between schools and local businesses to help young people be ready for work.
- Following a consultation on Home to School transport, it was unlikely that the proposed changes would now go ahead.
- Every child in Buckinghamshire who was successful in their 11+ exam is offered a Grammar School place. If new Grammar Schools were introduced across the Country it should take the pressure off places in Buckinghamshire.
- Bearbrook School had achieved Outstanding in its recent Ofsted inspection and the Cabinet Member offered his congratulations to the school.
- The Cabinet Member would provide a response to a Member's question on therapies after the meeting.

12 NOTICES OF MOTION

There were none.

13 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN - INFORMATION ONLY

14 INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS ON EVENTS AND MEMBER SERVICES - INFORMATION ONLY

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 16th February 2017 at 9.30am at The Oculus, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN