

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council convened and held on Thursday 26 April 2018 in Oculus, commencing at 9.30 am and concluding at 11.42 am.

PRESENT

Mrs P Birchley in the Chair;

Mr M Appleyard, Mr R Bagge, Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Mr S Bowles, Mr N Brown, Mr T Butcher, Mr D Carroll, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Mr C Clare, Mr A Collingwood, Mrs I Darby, Mr D Dhillon, Mr C Ditta, Mr C Etholen, Mrs B Gibbs, Ms N Glover, Mr D Hayday, Lin Hazell, Mr A Hussain, Mr M Hussain, Mr N Hussain, Mr P Irwin, Mr R Khan, Mr S Lambert, Ms A Macpherson, Mrs W Mallen, Mr D Martin, Mr P Martin, Mr R Reed, Mr B Roberts, Mr D Shakespeare OBE, Mr M Shaw, Mrs L Sullivan, Mrs J Teesdale, Mr M Tett, Ms J Ward, Julia Wassell, Mr D Watson, Ms A Wight, Mr G Williams and Ms K Wood

DIGNITARIES AND OTHERS PRESENT

Sir H Aubrey-Fletcher, Mrs M Aston, Mrs A Davies and Mrs G Miscampbell OBE DL

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Ms J Blake, Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mrs A Cranmer, Mr C Harriss, Mr W Whyte, Mr P Lawrence, Mr R Pushman and Ms R Farwell

1 PRESENTATION OF MEMBER DEVELOPMENT CHARTER MARK CERTIFICATE

Mrs Birchley announced that the County Council had been successful in the Re-Accreditation of the national Member Development Charter Mark, which demonstrated the strong commitment by the County Council to member development and a programme of work to assist them in their roles. Mrs Birchley in particular thanked those Members that sat and continued to do so on the Member Development Working Group and to officers in Democratic Services for their work.

Mrs Birchley introduced Councillor Rory Love, Chairman of South East Employers to present the certificate.

Cllr Love addressed Members and highlighted the following:

- It was the third time in presenting the Charter Mark award to the County Council.
- The Charter Mark was in recognition of the value placed on member development and that this was even more important now with the rise in challenges of delivering services with fewer resources and changes in the local government agenda.
- Cllr Love highlighted that the Charter Mark assessment team were impressed

with the importance and profile of member development at the council and to the degree it had been embedded. It was clear to assessors those Members of the working group all had a shared vision and that the programme had a clear link to strategic priorities. It was also noted that the programme of member development had a high degree of innovation within the best use of the budget.

- There had been a high level of engagement in the process and submission of evidence which included all Member Briefings and an in-depth induction programme.

In summary Cllr Love stated that the County Council should be proud of their achievement and that he looked forward to the development of the programme and the council sharing its success with other local authorities.

Cllr Love presented the certificate to Mr S Lambert and Mr M Shaw, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Member Development Working Group.

2 MINUTES

It was noted that page 8 referred to January 2017 when it should have read January 2018 and that the draft minutes of 22 February would be updated accordingly.

RESOLVED: The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2018 were AGREED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

4 COMMUNICATIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Blake, Mrs Clarke, Mrs Cranmer, Mr Harriss, Mr Whyte, Ms R Farwell, Mr Lawrence and Mr Pushman.

Mrs Birchley welcomed the Lord Lieutenant and thanked him for attending.

The Chairman confirmed that written questions and responses to Cabinet Members had been published online.

Mrs Birchley gave the following update of her recent activities as Chairman since the last meeting in February:

Lady Justice Macur had overseen the moving of Aylesbury Crown Court to their new premises on Walton Street. Mrs Birchley paid thanks on behalf of the County Council to Judge Francis Sheridan for his enormous efforts in keeping one of the busiest Crown courts in England and Wales active in Aylesbury.

The 12 March celebrated Commonwealth Day with the flag being raised and a lunch held, attended by those in Buckinghamshire that were born or lived abroad in Commonwealth countries.

On the 25 April the Chairman hosted a charity event at Dorney Wood with guest speaker Mr Chris Salmon, Director for Markets at the Bank of England who spoke

about how they had managed good mental health amongst their staff who worked in stressful international markets.

Further updates from the Chairman would be appended to the minutes.

5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6 BUCKINGHAMSHIRE THAMES VALLEY LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Mr M Tett introduced the item and paid credit to Mr D Carroll and the Transport, Economy and Environment Select Committee for proposing regular updates to Full Council on the work of the Buckinghamshire Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Mr Tett introduced Mr R Harrington Chief Executive of the Buckinghamshire LEP who presented a presentation on the current work of the LEP, which would be appended to the minutes.

Mr Harrington's presentation highlighted the following:

- The productivity of the County
 - 3rd highest productivity of all LEP areas
 - GVA per hour worked, almost 20% above national average
 - Exceptional Business Start Up & survival rates
 - Consistently low unemployment
- Their Business Growth Hub Buckinghamshire Business First
- Their skills hub working closely with the County Council to establish a new skills strategy for the area including launching the Bucks Skills Show
- Highlighted the three Enterprise Zones at Silverstone, Westcott and Woodlands
- Their investment in infrastructure and innovation
- Their support of the England's Economic Heartland programme
- What could be expected for the year ahead

Mr Harrington responded to Members questions as follows:

A Member asked how the LEP were bringing work and employment into urban areas and also the support to those in urban areas with start-up premises. Mr Hussain also mentioned the high housing costs driving residents away. Mr Harrington responded that the Strategic Economic Plan town centre regeneration was very much at the heart of the strategy. Mr Harrington mentioned that he had previously commissioned a number of master plans for Aylesbury and Wycombe and there were conversations with government agencies about deflecting their resources into local communities. Mr Harrington stated that when the LEP started their programme the money was available essentially for roads and skills capital. This had now broadened out to business incubation space. He stated that they had also invested in various spaces to allow businesses access on flexible terms.

A Member asked what Mr Harrington's thoughts were on the entrepreneurial academic and the entrepreneurial local councillor. Mr Harrington responded by saying that he were a big fan of entrepreneurship. He commented that they were working closely with

the University of Buckingham which was the first privately run university in the country and has an entrepreneurial programme where the students start businesses, not just from a purely academic point of view but also a practical one.

Mr Harrington confirmed that he would be attending County Council on a regular basis to update Members.

In response to a question on the Oxfordshire to Cambridge expressway route, Mr Harrington confirmed that the LEP supported the position of the County Council in respect to the Southern option.

Mr Harrington also stated that there were ongoing conversations with Home England regarding infrastructure requirements due to possible growth in the area. If invited to those conversations they could support them and bring more resource that might address some of the issues.

Mr Harrington was thanked for his presentation.

7 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEES

Mrs Birchley introduced the Annual Report of the Select Committees and asked the Chairman of each committee if they had anything to add to the report.

Finance, Performance and Resources

Mr D Watson had nothing further to add.

Transport, Environment and Communities

Mr D Carroll thanked the team for their work. He also thanked Mr S Lambert for chairing the Modern Slavery inquiry.

Health and Adult Social Care

Mr B Roberts thanked the committee for their work and Julia Wassell for leading the item on Mental Health. Mr Roberts also thanked Mrs E Wheaton, Committee and Governance Advisor, for her advice and support to the committee.

In response to a question about how the Committee could focus its activity, Mr Roberts stated that the health service was indeed a complicated area and that this was something that was under ongoing review and discussion with the Committee.

Children's Social Care and Learning

Mr D Dhillon thanked Members of the committee and officers for their support. He also thanked those that had attended various select committees to give evidence including young people. Mr Dhillon stated that a Permanent Exclusion Inquiry was concluding and would be reported on shortly.

RESOLVED: Council NOTED the Annual Report of the Select Committees

8 PROPOSAL FOR ADDITIONAL SPENDING ON HIGHWAYS

Mr Tett introduced the report and highlighted the following points:

- The County Council recognised that the current state of the roads was not of an acceptable standard.
- The adverse weather conditions recently experienced had had a huge impact on the state of the roads and the ability to carry out repairs.
- Mr Tett highlighted that over the last seven years £120m capital funding had been spent on resurfacing roads and that those resurfaced roads stood up better to bad weather.
- Mr Tett confirmed that a revenue fund had been assembled. This would normally be £2m but had also been supplemented by £1m additional funding from government as a result of lobbying, releasing £1.2m from the Council's reserves and £0.5m devolved funding to Members that Mr Tett strongly urged Members to target on local repairs within their divisions. By prioritising funding in Transport an additional £0.3m had been released, which brought the total fund to £5m.
- The £5m would be revenue funding which allowed it to be released quickly so that works could start straight away.
- This funding was in addition to the £15m agreed in February for resurfacing.
- Mr Tett stated that while this additional funding was welcomed, it would still not be enough to reach the expectations of residents.

Mr Tett proposed the motion which was seconded by Mr M Shaw.

Members raised the following comments and questions:

A Member commented that any extra funding as part of the HS2 programme would be important and that although Members had a budget for their local area this was still a limited amount which made prioritising works difficult. Mention was also made of the importance of the County's footpaths being up to standard.

A Member commended the team for doing a fantastic job over the winter months with the resources available to them. Members were urged to formally go back to Central Government for more funding overall.

A Member highlighted the need for the works to be carried out in a more systematic way and for the works to be supervised in order to ensure that the money was being used in the most efficient way.

A Member raised the issue that while repairs had been carried out, some were less than satisfactory and there was a need for these to be supervised.

Mr Tett responded to Members comments as summarised below:

- Mr Tett urged Members to advise residents to report any potholes - the Council can't take action unless reported.
- The debate with HS2 was ongoing.
- HGVs caused the most damage to the County's roads.
- Even though £5m was a substantial amount it still wasn't enough and that more

- money was required from capital to spend on resurfacing.
- The programme of works would ensure joined up working so that the money was spent effectively.

The report set out the following recommendation:

Recommendation

It is recommended that £1.234m of funds from the General Fund is combined with the existing service budgets, member devolved budgets, DfT funding, to create a £5m programme of high quality of highway repairs.

Council is asked to:

- 1. Agree that £1.234m of County Council reserves are used to supplement existing funding to provide for predominately plane and patch type repairs.**
- 2. Agree that all County Councillors are encouraged to use the £0.480m devolved member budget to focus additional resource to the carriageway repair budget.**

RESOLVED: Council AGREED the recommendations as set out above.

9 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS

Leader

In response to Members questions the following comments were made:

- The leader was asked if the County Council were doing all they could in terms of recycling. Mr Tett confirmed that not only did he Chair the LGA Economy, Environment, Housing & Transport Board but that he also took a personal interest in the issue. He confirmed that they had just received the 25 year Environment Strategy from the Secretary of State for Defra which they had supported. Mr Tett also highlighted the high rate of recycling at the County Council and the ambition to drive that rate up even further.
- Mr Tett responded to a question regarding residents and business owners being unable to access superfast broadband across Aylesbury town centre and the role the County played in Connected Counties. Mr Tett confirmed that Connected Counties and the County Council would only subsidise non-commercial areas which would not include Aylesbury. Mr Tett highlighted that the county had reached 90% coverage for residents and they were working with district colleagues in order to get that to 95%, however reaching 100% had its challenges, in particular in rural areas. Mr Tett also highlighted that they were in discussion with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) looking at a series of trials of techniques for closing the gap. A lot of focus had also been on fiber and there was a need to move more focus on cellular as more and more people communicated via their mobile phones.
- A Member suggested that those companies working towards 100% recycling could be invited to a summit in the County to share their ideas and progress. Mr Tett supported this suggestion.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation

Mr Shaw updated Members that he had addressed TfB workers at a recent conference and thanked in person those that had helped with the winter maintenance. Members stated that residents were also grateful for the updates on social media.

A Member asked if the money had been recovered for the damage to the bridges on the A40 at Denham and at Marlow. Mr Shaw confirmed that they were still waiting on full and final payment from the company responsible.

A Member highlighted the need for footpath maintenance and Mr Shaw stated that there had been budget put aside for capital works over the next 4 years.

Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health

Mr Brown highlighted the following:

- He thanked the Registration Service for their recent dedication to keep services going during the recent adverse weather. Members of the team had gone over and above in ensuring weddings still took place
- A new Mental Health support service was being created in schools to help support young people
- the success of the Community Organising in East Wycombe. Mr Brown highlighted the importance of Members getting involved.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment

Mr Chapple highlighted the following:

- The success of the Country Parks across the county
- Buckinghamshire's zero tolerance approach to fly tipping which was reflected in prosecution figures against the national average
- The consultation on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan had been extended further a further two weeks to finish on 3 May
- An error in the Waste Management figures in the report, which should have read 1,900 tons and not 1,900,000 tons

A Member highlighted the excellent work that the household waste sites do and asked whether they preclude non-residents to dispose. Mr Chapple confirmed that they did see a number of visitors from outside the county. Mr Chapple confirmed there would be a report coming to County Council later in the year regarding household waste recycling sites.

A Member thanked the team for their support to Colne Valley Park and if they could rely on the same support going forward. Mr Chapple stated that he had every faith that the support to Bucks Country Parks would continue.

Cabinet Member for Resources

Mr Chilver highlighted the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that come into force on 25 May and encouraged Members to attend the training provided for them.

A Member raised a question regarding the Gender Pay Gap and asked what other counties were doing to get to zero. Mr Chilver confirmed that Bucks had a good record.

Responding to a question from a Member asking if any support would be given to parish councils in relation to the new GDPR, Mr Chilver stated that they were currently

working on a comprehensive guide for schools and developing online training resources that could be accessed for a small fee.

Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Mrs Teesdale had nothing additional to add to the report and answered Members questions as follows:

A Member asked about the Early Help review. Mrs Teesdale advised that the consultation had been stopped, they were in the processing of reviewing information and a new consultation would be started. There would be a further update once Mr Whyte returned from annual leave.

Mrs Teesdale agreed to send written responses to the following questions from Members:

- How the out of county fostering numbers compared to this time last year.
- A member asked for assurances that delaying the Early Help review wouldn't have an impact on the savings required and if it did, were contingencies in place
- What support are we giving to FAST in Aylesbury and Wycombe as they come under even more pressure
- What was the County Council doing in responding to the recent findings regarding the Windrush community

Julia Wassell asked if she could join the unitary debate meeting with the Commissioner, as Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Mrs Teesdale agreed that this would be fine with her.

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

Lin Hazell highlighted the following points:

- Reminded Members to attend the all Member Briefing on Dementia taking place on 30 May
- Views were being submitted in response to the recent Green Paper
- Thanked all those involved in the winter response
- Highlighted the great facility at the Hughenden Extra Care Village

A Member raised the issue of accessing support being complicated for elderly residents living independently. Lin Hazell confirmed that processes across the service were being reviewed.

A Member referred back to the emergency extra budget provision given to the portfolio back in January and asked for assurances that the budget was now back on track. Lin Hazell confirmed that a huge amount of work had gone on in the portfolio and they were now forecasting a slight underspend.

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

A Member highlighted that the Ofsted report stated that all non-selective secondary provision in Aylesbury town was recorded at level three or below and wanted assurances that steps were being taken to address this. Mr Appleyard responded by stating that a programme had been initiated called Side by Side to link up good performing schools with those that weren't performing so well. The programme was in

the early stages but had been trailed in other areas and been successful. Mr Appleyard stated that he would hope to see some improvement in the annual inspections following this.

A Member congratulated the Early Years team for their achievements in securing provision. Mr Appleyard stated that Buckinghamshire were providing proportionately more places for early years than other authorities in the country, however this was still a struggle due to poor funding being available for providers from government. He confirmed that they had good working relationships with providers and were able to encourage them to increase their provision.

A Member asked the Cabinet Member to pass on his thanks to the Admissions and Home to School Transport teams for the way in which they had dealt with a number of challenging issues. Mr Appleyard stated that he made it a duty and commitment to visit the team on a regular basis. The team were in a challenging position but provided an excellent service.

10 NOTICES OF MOTION

There were none

11 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT EVENTS - INFORMATION ONLY

RESOLVED: Council NOTED the report

12 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN - INFORMATION ONLY

RESOLVED: Council NOTED the report

13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

17 May, 9.30am at The Oculus, Aylesbury.

CHAIRMAN