

## **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES**

Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council convened and held on Thursday 25 April 2019 in The Oculus, AVDC, Gatehouse Way Aylesbury, commencing at 9.32 am and concluding at 12.22 pm.

### **PRESENT**

Ms N Glover in the Chair;

Mr M Appleyard, Mr R Bagge, Mrs P Birchley, Mr S Bowles, Mr N Brown, Mr T Butcher, Mr D Carroll, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr J Chilver, Mr A Christensen, Mr C Clare, Mrs L Clarke OBE, Mr A Collingwood, Mrs A Cranmer, Mrs I Darby, Mr D Dhillon, Mrs B Gibbs, Mr C Harriss, Mr D Hayday, Ms L 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 B Roberts, 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, Mr M Colston, Mr P Lawrence, Mrs G Miscampbell OBE DL, Mr R Pushman and Mrs J Upton MBE

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr W Bendyshe-Brown, Ms J Blake, Mr C Etholen, Mr P Martin, Mr R Reed, Mr D Shakespeare OBE, Mr W Whyte, Mrs A Davies, Mrs V Letheren and Mr K Ross MBE DL

## **1 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2019 were **AGREED** as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

## **2 PETITIONS**

There were none.

## **3 COMMUNICATIONS**

Apologies were received from: Mr Appleyard, Mr Bendyshe-Brown, Mr Etholen, Mr Peter Martin, Mr Shakespeare, Mr Reed and Mr Whyte and Hon Aldermen Mr Ross, Mrs Letheren and Mrs Davies

The Chairman highlighted the recent Buckinghamshire County Council Workplace Hero Awards. The Chairman's update and winners appended to the minutes.

The Chairman also reported on a number of events since the last meeting and highlighted the following in particular:

- The Chairman thanked all colleagues involved in the Christmas present appeal.
- The recent Chesham Community Event
- The opening of The Exchange in Aylesbury town centre which was well attended.
- The British Legion Cadets Awards held at the Oculus, The Gateway.

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

There were none.

#### **5 SELECT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19**

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

##### **Health and Adult Social Care**

Mr B Roberts thanked the committee for their hard work and colleagues in Democratic Services for their support. Mr Roberts stated that he wanted to ensure that the excellent scrutiny work carried out by the County Council was carried forward into the new authority.

In response to how the public could be more involved in the HASC Select Committee, Mr Roberts stated that a number of approaches had been tested and he welcomed ideas from Members on how this could be improved.

##### **Children's Social Care and Learning**

Mr D Dhillon thanked Members of the committee, Democratic Services and officers for their support. He also mentioned the complex areas within the committee's remit that would need to be highlighted moving forward into the new authority. Mr Dhillon highlighted that there were now two primary school governors on the committee.

##### **Transport, Environment and Communities**

Mr D Carroll thanked the team for their work and highlighted the volume of work the committee had got through and looked to future work which included HS2 attending to discuss community engagement.

##### **Finance, Performance and Resources**

Mr D Watson thanked members for their continued commitment and support. Mr Watson highlighted recent progress on recommendations made by the committee which included how the public could have an increased view on how money was spent. Mr Watson also highlighted the unique opportunity ahead in becoming a unitary authority.

Mrs Clarke thanked colleagues in Democratic Services for their administration of all four select committees.

**RESOLVED: Council NOTED the Annual Report of the Select Committees.**

#### **6 PROPORTIONALITY REPORT**

The Chairman advised that a revised report had been published as a supplement.

Council considered the report and recommendations.

**RESOLVED: Council CONFIRMED the political balance in the distribution of seats across Committees be as set out in Tables 1 and 2 in the supplement report, to accord with the rules on proportionality.**

## **7 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORTS**

### **Leader**

Mr M Tett highlighted the following updates:

- The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid was essential to provide infrastructure upfront to accommodate housing growth.
- The bid was submitted in February/ March 2019 and a result was expected by summer. An evaluation of the report would now not be given until June which would result in a delay in announcement.
- Mr Tett had written to Homes England to draw attention to the fact that the funding was essential.

In response to Member questions, the Leader highlighted the following:

- A formal welcome was given to Ms Julia Upton, MBE as the new High Sherriff for Buckinghamshire.
- The structural change order for the unitary council had been laid but not yet made as it still had to be debated and agreed by the House of Commons and House of Lords.
- The councils had entered into an agreement collectively for a proposal that all Members would work within the parameters set down by government in the structural change order. Two meetings had taken place, one of which agreed a spend protocol around new expenditure.
- Mr Tett expressed concerns that the authority was about to enter into a 10 year+ waste contract just before the formation of the unitary organisation.
- Although concerns were expressed over financial pressures due to the high figure of elected Members in the new authority, it was hoped that this would encourage diversity in the election of new Members.
- The Shadow Authority would come into effect when it was passed through parliament.
- Buckinghamshire County Council(BCC) recognised the need for a bypass for the Ivers and the Aylesbury area to provide for a link around Aylesbury to accommodate the high levels of traffic caused by high housing growth. This supported the argument for the importance of HIF. BCC would champion that the bypass be dualled from the beginning as opposed to a single carriage way.

### **Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transportation**

Mr M Shaw highlighted the following updates:

- A new contracts manager for Ringway Jacobs had been recruited. Ms Louise McCann would be joining the organisation from Northamptonshire County Council.
- A Modern United Nations debate would take place at The Oculus the following day. This would include 150 young people and would be on the topic of extremism.

In response to Member questions, the Deputy Leader highlighted the following:

- Regular meetings were being held with HS2 who were being pushed to disclose

information on HS2 traffic numbers.

- Mr Shaw had accepted an invitation to visit the south of the county and view the newly implemented parking sensors following Mr A Collingwood's disappointment in the system.
- In response to concerns raised on damage to footways caused by utility companies, residents were encouraged to contact BCC to report damages so that licenses could be checked.
- Reassurance was given that outstanding road schemes from the previous year would be reinstated and delivered.
- Mr Shaw gave apologies to Mr Lambert and Ms Glover for distress caused to residents due to the rising bollards in their divisions. The bollards had been vandalised and were overly sensitive causing them to malfunction. Ongoing issues had been reported and raised multiple times via Fix My Street and select committee. Mr Shaw had raised the issue with Ringway Jacobs and was awaiting a response. This response would be shared with Mr Lambert to pass on to parish councils and residents.

**ACTION: Mr Shaw**

- Mr Shaw would also confirm if faulty lamps in Coldharbour were due to an electrical malfunction or if they were broken down.
- In response to praise over how well Fix My Street was working, Mr Shaw highlighted that it had been nominated for a national award. It was also highlighted that newly recruited Depot Manager, Ms Rosie Taylor, had been nominated for a national award as the only female depot manager in the country.

## **Cabinet Member for Planning and Environment**

Mr B Chapple had no further updates to add to the report. In response to Member questions, Mr Chapple highlighted the following:

- Mr A Collingwood felt that the Environment Agency (EA) had not delivered on their promise for the flood elevation scheme in Marlow. They needed to return and complete the work properly so the field could be opened and used by children. Mr Collingwood would email Mr Chapple so that the issue could be escalated to the EA.

**ACTION: Mr Collingwood**

- Thanks was given to Mr Chapple for help provided with responding to residents who were dissatisfied with the changes to the household waste recycling centers, but it was highlighted that residents struggled to understand how the administration costs would not outweigh the revenue gain.
- Julia Wassell would email Mr Chapple regarding resident concerns over a footpath which had the potential to disrupt local wildlife. The County Local Wildlife Officer would get in touch with Julia to advise on this.

**ACTION: Julia Wassell**

- The decision to implement the charges in the household waste recycling centres had not been easily made, but failure to do so would have resulted in the closure of more sites.
- Mr Chapple highlighted that flytipping would be kept under review and closely monitored. Most cases of flytipping were executed by commercial companies as opposed to law abiding residents. In response to concerns of Members and residents that the newly implemented charges would result in an increase in flytipping, Mr Chapple assured Members that it was very unlikely that there would be a direct correlation between the two.

- A meeting would take place the following week to confirm the charges of the recycling centres. The charges would be tweaked if necessary.
- There was funding in the capital programme to make improvements to Rabans Lane to accommodate increased traffic caused by the recycling centres.
- An issue regarding Aylesbury Town Council being turned away from the recycling centre had been resolved.
- The staff onsite at the recycling centres were trusted, but measures to monitor best practise were in place to ensure that staff were not exploiting residents in return for cash payment. Cash payments were not accepted on the site.
- Members praised the efforts of flytipping staff in the organisation.
- It was felt that harsher punishments on flytippers such as points on licenses and the seizing of vehicles would see a reduction in the offence. Mr Chapple highlighted that flytipping is currently the responsibility of the County Council in partnership with the District Councils and that most people realised the negative impact that having a criminal record could have on their lives. Mr Chapple would include this the next time he writes to the Secretary of State.

**ACTION: Mr Chapple**

- Letters of exception would be given to town/ parish councils and charities who had taken part in a clean-up of the area.

#### Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health

Mr N Brown highlighted the following updates:

- A successful event held to educate people on the negative effects of domestic abuse.
- The benefits of the Street Associations project. This had been taken up to a national level.
- Thanks was given to Mr P Irwin for his radio broadcast on mental health.

In response to Member questions, Mr Brown highlighted the following:

- Work on Marlow Library was an ongoing project. Updates would be given when possible following the move into unitary.
- In relation to the EU settlement scheme, library staff would be given support to help members of the public with the home office process. An update would be provided to Mr Christensen on what work was being done.
- In response to concerns raised over vulnerable young people joining gangs, Mr Brown highlighted that the government had failed to make youth service a legal requirement. Lack of funding had resulted in a struggle to keep some youth clubs running. PCC had gained funding that had been targeted towards the prevention of knife crime and gangs. This was in the process of being developed.

#### Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Mr G Williams, Deputy Cabinet Member highlighted the following updates:

- The service was hoping to host a children in care celebration event in August. Potential sponsors were being sought..

In response to Member questions, Mr Williams highlighted the following:

- In response to concerns over the recruitment and retention of social workers it

was highlighted that positive changes were being made, with an increasing confidence across the manager ranks. Members were asked to spread the word of the benefits of working for Buckinghamshire County Council.

- Thanks were given to Members for their support of the opening of the new children's home which had been rated as "good" by Ofsted.
- The pressures of an increased demand on the service while experiencing budget cuts were highlighted.

### **Cabinet Member for Resources**

Mr J Chilver highlighted the following updates:

- Congratulations were given to all winners of the "Workplace Heroes" awards.

In response to Member questions, Mr Chilver highlighted the following:

- Praise was given over the selection of an appropriate land contractor and sub-contractor and how the concerns of residents had been taken on and addressed.
- There had been no further update on the previous contribution by charities for Seeley's House. A response from the Legal team was being chased.
- There had been a delay in works on the Old Wycombe Library due to asbestos but it was hoped that staff would be able to move in later in the year.
- Members were pleased with the renovations to the former police station in Aylesbury, with a Japanese restaurant due to open in May 2019.
- Praise and thanks was given to IT and Democratic Services for the changes in IT access for Members. Clarification was needed of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) statement. Mr Chilver would consult officers and report back on this.

#### **ACTION: Mr Chilver**

- Regeneration plans for the Old County Offices were high on the property agenda. There were plans to convert these into 50 town centre apartments which would be a great contribution to the regeneration of the town centre. The building plans had been through two changes and there had been delays from the planning authority.

### **Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing**

Ms L Hazell highlighted the following updates:

- The Better Lives transformation programme had been shortlisted in the MJ awards.

In response to Member questions, Ms Hazell highlighted the following:

- Members would be engaged in the planning phase of the short breaks consultation where possible.
- Three organisations had expressed an interest in taking over the space of Thrift Farm. This was being worked through.
- Thanks were given to senior managers and teams for providing effective and immediate assistance for two specific local families.

### **Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Ms A Cranmer, Deputy Cabinet Member, highlighted the following updates:

- Bucks Learning Trust (BLT) had ceased trading in March. All school improvement services were taken in house.
- A new school had opened in Berryfields with 76 students and 720 projected. A teacher recruited at the school, Ms C Imbriano had been nominated for outstanding new teacher of the year.
- 91.5% of children in the county attended schools rated as “good” or “outstanding” by Ofsted which was above the national average.

In response to Member questions, Ms Cranmer highlighted the following:

- A reorganisation of the Special Educational Needs (SEN) department would help to address the problem of outstanding SEN assessments.
- More praise of local schools was needed, regular updates could be included in local newsletters.
- Interactions with schools were taking place to address the closure of Burnham Academy by E Act. This had caused a lot of distress to pupils and parents.
- The goal for the department was to have 100% of children enrolled in “good” or “outstanding” schools. There was still a lot of work to do especially in urban areas.

## **8 NOTICES OF MOTION**

The Chairman advised that a Motion to Council: “Enabling works for HS2 in Buckinghamshire” had been received from Mr Clare.

Mr Clare proposed the motion and highlighted his main points (appended to the minutes).

Mrs Macpherson seconded the motion and highlighted her main points to Council (appended to the minutes).

Mr Tett, Leader highlighted the following points:

- The long and proud record held by the Council in opposition to HS2. The Council had been at the forefront of campaigning and had actively lobbied for mitigations since the bill had been passed. Mr Tett stated that HS2 were woefully short with those mitigations
- The business case was flawed and the money could be better spent on improvements to existing commuter routes, high speed broadband and west to east connectivity.
- Mr Tett urged the Government to stop HS2 now and not to press ahead with a flawed business case.
- Mr Tett looked forward in anticipation of the motion being passed and writing to the Secretaries of State on this dual strategy that impacted not only transport but also the environment.
- Dame Cheryl Gillan MP on the anticipated passing of the motion would also write to the Secretaries of State in support.
- Building on the success of the motion going through the district councils, Mr Tett stated that they spoke as one council to stop HS2 and urged Members to support the motion.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lambert, highlighted the following points:

- Mr Lambert rose to support the motion.
- Following the announcement of HS2 in 2010 there had been immediate opposition due to the environmental impact.
- People's property, the impact on local wildlife and the damage to historic woodland had not been taken into account. Concerns were expressed over the effect on climate change and habitats.
- Dame C Gillan, MP had been a champion against HS2 throughout the campaign and had spoken regularly in parliament.
- Aylesbury MP, Mr David Lidington had formed a committee to vote against HS2 every step of the way, but had not followed through with this.
- Progression of transport lines needed to be made, but HS2 was not using modern technology to do this and was not the right approach,
- Birmingham would gain a lot of benefits from HS2 and had spent millions of pounds on upgrading the infrastructure of the city centre to accommodate the project. It was suggested that the full environmental impact was not understood.
- Mr Lambert wanted the motion to be amended to include all MPs in Buckinghamshire and not just the government.
- Mr Lambert thanked the HS2 BCC Officers for the work they had done.

The Chairman invited Members to debate the motion and the following main points were made:

- The business case for HS2 was not strong.
- The concerns of residents had not been taken into account by HS2.
- HS2 would have a serious impact on the environment, local wildlife and habitats.
- The project should be discontinued, and funding should be used to improve the existing railway lines.
- Money would be better invested in providing relief roads in Iver and around Aylesbury. This would relieve congestion and improve air quality.
- There was no economic case for HS2 with a cost of £150 billion.
- The damage to the environment and costs of HS2 outweighed the benefits.
- There had been cases of residents experiencing severe distress over HS2 who had decided to move out of Buckinghamshire because of it.
- Members and residents should unite together to stop the project.
- The resolution should be passed unanimously.

The Chairman put forward the following Motion to Council:

This Council proposes that the Leader should write to Government to request that all enabling works for HS2 in Buckinghamshire should be paused until the Notice to Proceed to main works contractors has been approved. As required by the Department of Transport, Notice to Proceed should not be given until management capability, affordability of contracts and robustness of revised business case have all been proven. We see no reason why the County should suffer significant disruption and long term environmental destruction until detailed design and cost has been approved. We also ask that HS2 Ltd significantly improves the effectiveness of its community engagement with those impacted by the line.

**RESOLVED: The proposed Motion was voted upon by a show of hands. This was**

**carried unanimously.**

**9 CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS TAKEN - INFORMATION ONLY**

**RESOLVED: Cabinet NOTED the report.**

**10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

23 May 2019.

**CHAIRMAN**