

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the **CDC COUNCIL** held on **16 JANUARY 2017**

PRESENT: Councillor M Harker - Chairman
" P N Shepherd - Vice Chairman

Councillors: A K Bacon
D J Bray
J Cook
E A Culverhouse
I A Darby
M Flys
C J Ford
A S Hardie
G K Harris
P M Jones
R J Jones
D J Lacey
J E MacBean
P E C Martin
S A Patel
D W Phillips
N M Rose
C J Rouse
J J Rush
M W Shaw
L M Smith
M R Smith
M J Stannard
N I Varley
E A Walsh

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors S P Berry, J A Burton, A J Garth, J L Gladwin, P J Hudson, C J Jackson, C M Jones, M W Titterington, D M Varley, H M Wallace, C J Wertheim and F S Wilson

171 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mark Shaw declared a personal interest due to his role as a Buckinghamshire County Councillor.

172 MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I A Darby, presented the report which sought agreement to make a submission to the Secretary of State under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and Section 15 Cities and Devolution Act 2016.

The Leader advised that the momentum for unitary government and the drive for change in local government has increased in recent months and on 27 September 2016 Buckinghamshire County council made a submission to the Secretary of State which proposed the creation of a unitary Council to cover the existing administrative area of the County Council. The four District Councils in Buckinghamshire were unconvinced that the County Council submission was in the best interest of the people of Buckinghamshire, and therefore jointly commissioned a report from Deloitte consultants to consider the range of options available for the future of Buckinghamshire. Following publication of that report in October stakeholder engagement was undertaken and feedback received from 146 key stakeholders including 79 town and parish councils, 25 local businesses and business groups, 37 voluntary groups and 5 other public sector organisations. The response from stakeholders indicated 73% in favour of a two or three unitary model which would secure the best outcome for Buckinghamshire; against only 27% in favour of a single unitary authority for the County.

The District Councils' report had undertaken work towards a Strategic Options Case to help make an informed decision. Based on the Strategic Options report, as detailed in Appendix 2, the draft submission at Appendix 3 proposed that the five Councils that currently operate on a two tier basis should be abolished and replaced by a two unitary model of governance across the whole of Buckinghamshire.

C Ford entered at 6.37pm

It was noted that there were significant differences between the north and south of Buckinghamshire which needed to be reflected in local government structures to ensure services were delivered to meet the needs of local residents and communities whilst maximising the areas' economic potential and delivering long-term financial sustainability.

H Wallace entered at 6.40pm

The next steps were for the agreed proposal to be submitted to the Secretary of State to consider whether Buckinghamshire should move to a unitary form of governance and abolish the existing two tier arrangements. The Secretary of State had agreed to consider the four District Councils' unitary proposals as well as the County Council proposal before making a final decision which

was not likely before March 2017. Cllr Darby proposed and Cllr Phillips seconded

That:

- (i) the Strategic options case at Appendix 2 be endorsed; and
- (ii) the submission prepared by the District Councils be supported
- (iii) The Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to make minor amendments and to make the submission on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State.

Councillor P Jones opposed the proposal for two unitary councils in favour of a single unitary option for Buckinghamshire for two main reasons; that one Council for the County would provide increased clarity on where residents need to go for services and that the one unitary option would result in higher savings. He added that if a new council was formed on the existing Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe boundaries it should be called the Council of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Councillor D Lacey spoke in favour of the District Councils proposal for a two council unitary option for the County based on the need to retain a strong working relationship with local based councils that understood the needs and delivery of services required for residents and local communities.

Councillor A Bacon supported Councillor P Jones in opposing the proposal for two unitary councils in favour of one single unitary council for the County as he was not convinced by the geographical arguments outlined in the report and considered one single council would be a more effective governance arrangement in terms of reducing costs.

Councillor Darby accepted her right to reply and summarised that the proposal was not just in the interest of saving money but was to establish the best approach to delivery of services to residents and local communities in Buckinghamshire.

The recommendation as proposed by Councillor Darby and seconded by Councillor Phillips was put to the vote. The recommendation was carried and it was

RESOLVED:

That:

- (i) the Strategic options case at Appendix 2 be endorsed; and**
- (ii) the submission prepared by the District Councils be supported**
- (iii) The Leader of the Council be given delegated authority to make minor amendments and to make the submission on behalf of the Council to the Secretary of State.**

The meeting ended at 7.03pm