

CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL

held on **11 APRIL 2018**

PRESENT: Councillor P Shepherd - Chairman of the Council
G Harris - Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillors:	A Bacon	Councillors:	S Patel
	J Burton		D Phillips
	J Cook		N Rose
	I Darby		C Rouse
	M Flys		J Rush
	C Ford		L Smith
	A Garth		M Smith
	J Gladwin		M Stannard
	M Harker		M Titterington
	M Harrold		D Varley
	C Jackson		N Varley
	C Jones		H Wallace
	P Jones		J Waters
	J MacBean		C Wertheim
	P Martin		F Wilson
	V Martin		

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillor Nick Southworth, the new Councillor for the Ridgeway District Ward.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors D Bray, E Culverhouse, P Hudson, R J Jones, M Shaw and E Walsh

89 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors I Darby and P Martin declared personal interests in agenda item 4 as Members of Buckinghamshire County Council.

90 MODERNISING LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE - ANNOUNCEMENT

Buckinghamshire County Council submitted a case for a single unitary model of governance for Buckinghamshire to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in September 2016. At the Full Council meeting held on 16 January 2017, Members agreed to submit a unitary bid to the Secretary of State to deliver a two unitary model. On 12 March 2018, the

Secretary of State issued a 'minded to' decision in favour of the single unitary model proposed by Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I Darby, presented Members with a report asking Members to consider next steps, including the approach to making representations to the Secretary of State following his announcement on unitary governance in Buckinghamshire. It was noted that the period for representations to the Secretary of State would expire 25 May 2018. The Leader stressed the continued lack of support for a single unitary authority by the four district councils, and consequently for the Secretary of State's minded to decision. The Leader emphasised the fact that this was a minded to decision and not a final decision. It was then proposed by Councillor I Darby and seconded by Councillor M Stannard:

1. that the Secretary of State's minded to decision published on the 12 March 2018 (Appendix A) be noted;
2. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to make representations to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Councils be endorsed;
3. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to delegate the final wording of the representations to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders be endorsed;
4. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders to take such action as deemed necessary to protect the best interests of Chiltern and South Bucks residents and communities including but not limited to, seeking expert legal advice and lodging of legal challenges, communication campaigns, further stakeholder engagement and associated activities be endorsed; and
5. to agree an initial budget of £20,000 for each Council to support the above actions.

Members debated the recommendations. A question was raised as to whether the redevelopment of Chiltern Pools leisure centre could be progressed in light of the Council's uncertain future, the Leader advised that until a final decision had been made by the Secretary of State, the project would be progressed and reviewed in due course in light of what the Secretary of State decides. Unlike the future of local government in Buckinghamshire, the community need for a new leisure and community facility was certain, and it was hoped that any future authority or authorities would recognise this.

Councillor P Jones continued to oppose the proposal for two unitary councils for the reasons highlighted at the meeting of Full Council 16 January 2017 and therefore could not support the recommendations. He felt that residents identify with Buckinghamshire as a whole and not any one specific area of local administration e.g., the Chiltern District, and urged Members to view the new council as a completely new structure and a fresh beginning.

Councillor N Rose spoke in favour of the districts' proposal and advised Members that the north and south of Buckinghamshire faced different issues, and that the different needs of the communities should be reflected in the structure of local government in Bucks. He supported the recommendations as per the report but felt that a budget of £20,000 may not be sufficient. It was then proposed by Councillor N Rose and seconded by Councillor C Jones that recommendation 5 of the motion be amended to read "to agree an initial budget of up to £40,000 for the Council" rather than "to agree an initial budget of £20,000 for each Council".

Councillor H Wallace entered the meeting 18:53.

Councillor A Bacon supported Councillor P Jones in favour of a single unitary model and could not support the recommendations to Full Council, particularly the proposed increase in the budget figure. He felt that there were no new arguments to present to the Secretary of State and that the money could be spent on other areas of need.

A number of members made the point that it was the quality of services to local residents that was important, as the financial savings in the context of the total budget of any new organisation were not massive. Points were made about the County Council's poor management track record, and that their proposal lacked vision and imagination.

In general, Members supported the motion as amended and wanted to ensure that appropriate resources were made available so that residents could make informed representations to the Secretary of State. Councillor Darby exercised her right of reply and summarised that the creation of two unitary councils would make key savings whilst ensuring more effective localised services in the best interests of the people of Buckinghamshire. The proposal to amend recommendation 5 was put to the vote and the amendment was carried. As such, Full Council was asked to agree the motion, as recommended by the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee and as amended by Full Council.

The motion as amended was put to the meeting, **CARRIED** and it was therefore

RESOLVED:

- 1. that the Secretary of State's minded to decision published on the 12 March 2018 (Appendix A) be noted;**
- 2. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to make representations to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Councils be endorsed;**
- 3. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to delegate the final wording of the representations to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders be endorsed;**
- 4. that the Chiltern and South Bucks Joint Committee decision on 4 April 2018 to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leaders to take such action as deemed necessary to protect the best interests of Chiltern and South Bucks residents and communities including but not limited to, seeking expert legal advice and lodging of legal challenges, communication campaigns, further stakeholder engagement and associated activities be endorsed; and**
- 5. that an initial budget of up to £40,000 for the Council to support the above actions be agreed.**

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm