

**MINUTES OF THE
SHADOW EXECUTIVE MEETING**

TUESDAY 20TH AUGUST 2019

Present: Councillor Martin Tett (Chairman)

Councillors B Chapple OBE, A Cranmer, I Darby,
T Green, P Hogan, A Macpherson, D Martin, N Naylor,
W Whyte, G Williams, T Butcher, D Dhillon, B Everitt,
N Glover, D Johncock and L Walsh

Also in Attendance:

Councillor R Stuchbury

Apologies: K Wood, S Bowles, J Chilver, C Harriss, M Shaw and
F Wilson

2 Minutes

The minutes of the 23 July Shadow Executive meeting were agreed subject to an amendment to minute item 15 to note that the decision was endorsed by Members subject to due diligence, as well as clarification on legalities in relation to responsibility for contamination and funding for ongoing revenue costs.

3 Declarations of interest

Councillor W Whyte declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 as the Aylesbury Vale District Council representative on the board of Aylesbury Vale Estates.

4 Question Time

Question 1

The proposed route of the Cambridge, Milton Keynes to Oxford expressway is expected to be published in September. What level of consultation is envisaged following publication of the proposed route, and is this a matter for the respective District Councils as local planning authorities to consider, or the Shadow Authority?

It was advised that the new Secretary of State for Transport would determine the timing and nature of consultation on the Expressway. Further, that Highways England and the Department for Transport had been urged to consult more widely with members of the public and Town and Parish Councils when the consultation was expected to take place in the autumn. It was noted that all the Buckinghamshire Councils would be entitled to consider and respond to the matter individually.

Several questions had been submitted to the Shadow Executive by Councillor R Stuchbury. It was advised the answers to the further questions submitted by Councillor Stuchbury would be received in writing, and would be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

5 28 Day Notice

RESOLVED:

That the 28 Day Notice be noted.

6 Accommodation Strategy

The report sought a view from the Shadow Executive on the proposed approach to the development of a short and longer term office accommodation strategy for the new Buckinghamshire Council to support service delivery and the democratic process both in transition and transformation. It was noted that correspondence from UNISON relating to the proposed approach had been received.

It was felt that the Gateway was a sensible choice for a small corporate headquarters on an interim basis given its central location in the county and the fact that this is a modern building with sufficient car parking for Members and staff.

A concern was raised as to the proposed budget of £700k for the transition accommodation strategy. It was noted that the budget was the maximum amount expected to be required, and was to ensure that the building was fit for purpose to cater for the needs of 147 Members and staff from vesting day. The Chief Executive was asked to keep this budget under review.

Members felt that the approach for the majority of members of staff to remain in their existing offices in the interim was a sensible approach. It was suggested that, although Aylesbury was the geographical centre of the county, the largest population was further south and that a venue further south of the county might be more suitable. It was noted that, at present, Aylesbury was the closest town to their homes for the majority of members of staff working for the 5 Bucks Councils. Furthermore, it was clarified that this strategy only referred to office accommodation, and was not about access to Council services by members of the public. A further paper on council access points was under development, and this would include the arrangements by which members of the public will be able to call into see the Council at different locations across Buckinghamshire.

It was questioned as to whether external consultants or in house specialist knowledge would be used to support the development of the longer term accommodation strategy, and it was noted that the Council would seek to minimise the use of external consultants where possible.

It was advised that there was space available at the Gateway for a small corporate headquarters, and that the potential lost rental income for the space proposed to accommodate the headquarters at the Gateway would need to be taken into account in developing the budget for the new Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1. to agree that the new Unitary Council will have a countywide footprint for both Members and Staff, and that the emerging policy will enable the flexibility to work in any of the new council's offices across the county.**

2. to agree to a two phase office accommodation strategy as set out in the report to include:

a) a first phase to take the necessary steps to implement the proposed small Unitary Headquarters at the Gateway, Aylesbury, on an interim basis.

b) a second phase to take the necessary steps to enable the transformation work for the office accommodation strategy post vesting day.

3. to delegate authority to the Shadow Interim S151 Officer to make necessary appointments of consultants and contractors to facilitate the work to progress the strategy and implementation, provided that costs fall within the budget envelope set out in the report.

7 Exclusion of the public

RESOLVED:

that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

8 **Waste Collection Contract Procurement for Chiltern, South Bucks and Wycombe**

The Confidential report was discussed in private session and it was agreed that officers would produce a confidential paper for use by the Chief Executive of Chiltern Council and the Interim Head of Paid Service of Wycombe District Council for inclusion into the Cabinet reports which will be considered by the District Councils as Confidential Items on 27 August.

It was then **RESOLVED:**

That the Leader of the Buckinghamshire Shadow Executive shall write in confidence to the Leaders of Aylesbury Vale, Wycombe, South Bucks and Chiltern District Councils to summarise the Shadow Executive's views and decision on the current waste procurement process.

Members then discussed future steps which may be taken and it was

RESOLVED:

That the Chief Executive for the Shadow Authority be authorised to take any further steps as appropriate to implement the decision of the Shadow Executive in relation to the waste procurement process.

End of meeting: 12.21 pm

Questions received from Councillor R Stuchbury – 20 August 2019

Question 1

The proposed route of the Cambridge, Milton Keynes to Oxford expressway is expected to be published in September. What level of consultation is envisaged following publication of the proposed route, and is this a matter for the respective District Councils as local planning authorities to consider, or the Shadow Authority?

Answer

It will be for the new Secretary of State for Transport to determine the timing and nature of consultation on the Expressway. The next stage would normally be to undertake a non-statutory public consultation exercise seeking views on a range of route options within the Government's preferred corridor. Should this go ahead it is now more likely to be in late Autumn not September. All the Buckinghamshire Councils will be entitled to consider this matter individually, although it does make sense for the Shadow Executive to broker a collective view from all Councils if possible.

Question 2

The government intends to place in its growth plans roughly 100,000 new properties in Buckinghamshire. With this in mind, as well as the plans for the expressway, what strategic planning can be undertaken by the Shadow Authority?

Answer

We are not aware that it is Government policy to place more homes in Buckinghamshire than those already being planned in the three Local Plans in various stages of preparation across the County. The new Unitary Plan for Buckinghamshire has to be agreed within 5 years of vesting day and will provide the strategic plan for the County. The Shadow Executive's priority is to support the completion of the Vale of Aylesbury and Wycombe Local Plans, and to progress the joint Chiltern & South Buckinghamshire Local Plan as far as possible, before vesting day. Time and resource permitting, the Shadow Authority may start evidence gathering to assist in unitary plan preparation post-vesting day.

Question 3

Will the Shadow Authority have the ability to meet to form a view on the proposed route for the expressway and the government's growth plans for Buckinghamshire, or are these matters for the respective local planning authorities?

Answer

This is currently a matter for each of the individual Buckinghamshire Councils to make comments on and elected Members should make their view known to their individual authorities.

Question 4

The draft accounts for 2018/19 show that the five councils had total useable reserves of £300M, of which half were held by BCC. What do we expect useable reserves to be at the start of 2020/21 within the new Buckinghamshire Council?

Answer

The consolidated reserves position is currently being reviewed, including the currently agreed use of reserves by the 5 councils.

Any final use of reserves will be considered as part of the budget process and the overall position will not, therefore, be able to be confirmed until then.