



Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 JULY 2022 IN THE STREET, THE GATEWAY, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 4.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 7.48 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

D Dhillon (Chairman of the Council), P Birchley (Vice-Chairman of the Council), S Adoh, D Anthony, K Ashman, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, S Barrett, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, S Broadbent, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, R Carington, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Fealey, M Flys, R Gaffney, M Fayyaz, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, T Hogg, G Hollis, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, Cllr C Jackson, S James, D Johncock, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan BEM, D King, S Lewin, Cllr A Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, Z Mohammed, H Mordue, S Morgan, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, W Raja, N Rana, S Rouse, G Sandy, M Smith, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, L Sullivan, D Summers, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, A Turner, M Turner, H Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn, A Wood and K Wood

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Ms D Brock (High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire)

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors D Barnes, P Bass, N Brown, D Carroll, M Collins, P Drayton, T Egleton, C Etholen, P Griffin, C Heap, I Hussain, P Irwin, C Jones, M Knight, J MacBean, I Macpherson, R Newcombe, J Ng, C Oliver, M Rand, J Rush, G Smith, L Smith, N Southworth, B Stanier, J Towns, P Turner, G Wadhwa, and A Waite. Apologies were also received from the Lord Lieutenant, Lady Howe.

1A HONORARY ALDERMAN MARGARET ASTON

Tribute was paid to a past County Councillor and Honorary Alderman, Margaret Aston, who had recently passed away. The Chairman recorded sincere condolences to her family on their sad loss.

Mrs Aston had been a Member of Buckinghamshire County Council from 1993 to 2017 representing the Haddenham and Stone/Haddenham/Bernwood Division and was made an Honorary Alderman from 2017. Some of her appointments during 24 years on the Council included:

- Chairman of the Council 2005-06.
- Cabinet Member for Children & Young People 2000-2004.
- Cabinet Member for Community Engagement & Public Health 2016-17.
- Chairman of Appeals & Complaints Committee 2007-2013.
- Elected Member rep on the Adoption Panel 1999-2002 and 2005-2013.

Her funeral would take place at the Watermead crematorium at 2.30pm on Thursday 28 July.

Members then observed a minute`s silence in memory of Margaret Aston.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman paid tribute to Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue services, who had worked so diligently to fight fires in extreme temperatures over recent days. The Chairman further thanked NHS and Council staff who had continued to provide vital services to Buckinghamshire residents in the challenging temperatures. In addition, the Chairman thanked the Chief Executive and staff of the Council as well as host families for the excellent high level of support given to Ukrainian guests.

The Chairman reported on the numerous events he had attended and supported since his appointment in May. Amongst the many events were a Wycombe Wanderers FC Forum event, a number of Platinum Jubilee celebrations including a cake judging ceremony for which the Chief Executive of the Council and Lord Lieutenant were thanked for arranging, Armed Forces events at RAF Benson and High Wycombe including flag raising ceremonies, a Buckinghamshire Scout Beavers event, Leap award ceremony, Horses, Hounds and Heroes (Horses Trust) event, MacMillan cancer charity event in South Bucks, Rural Farm Tour, Citizenship Ceremonies, Chesham Town Mayor Civic Ceremony, Lord Lieutenant presentation of MBE, Whizz Fizz Fest, Desborough Carnival, Queens Veteran Rally in Stoke Mandeville, the official opening of Penn Road Cemetery, prize giving ceremony for South Bucks Police Cadets, Simply Walks Annual Picnic and the 10th anniversary of the Princes Trust.

The Chairman confirmed that his charity for 2022/23 would be MacMillan Cancer Support and he highlighted the excellent support and services MacMillan provided residents and their families who were going through cancer treatment. A Golf competition would be hosted at South Buckinghamshire Golf Club on 30 September, and other events would include a movie night at Pinewood Studios and a Bollywood event, for which dates would be confirmed.

Members were encouraged to attend and make these events a success.

The Vice-Chairman reported that she had attended and supported a number of events including a Platinum Jubilee Tea Party at Buckingham Library and numerous Citizenship Ceremonies. The Vice-Chairman added that she had met many new Ukrainian guests, securing violin lessons for a young person and advanced English courses to assist guests in improving their language skills and applying for jobs. The Vice-Chairman also recognised the excellent education providers in Buckinghamshire, highlighting an event she had attended at Chiltern Hills Academy to pay tribute to their recently retired Head Teacher.

5 PETITIONS

There were none.

6 PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Council considered a report that requested the Buckinghamshire Council Pay Policy Statement 2022/23 attached at Appendix 1 be approved. The Council was required to annually update and publish a Pay Policy Statement in accordance with Section 38(i) of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement had been considered by the Senior Appointments and Pay Committee on 6 July 2022, and following approval by Full Council, the Annual Pay Policy Statement and any amendments would be published on the website along with details of remuneration of the council's Chief Officers. The Pay Policy Statement covered all employees.

Members rose to voice concerns over inflation and cost of living costs many staff, particularly the lower paid were facing and the 2022 Gender Pay Gap analysis. The Leader highlighted that the Pay Policy Statement covered the previous year, rather than the current year and acknowledged the rising inflation and cost of living crisis which was one of the reasons that those staff paid under £27k would receive an additional pay award for 2022/23. The Leader also advised that the deadline for the Gender Pay Gap analysis had been extended so had not been included within this report, however when this was available it would be made available in the public domain.

The Leader moved the recommendation to approve the Buckinghamshire Council Pay Policy Statement (1 July 2022). This was seconded by Councillor T Butcher.

RESOLVED –

That the Annual Pay Policy Statement (1 July 2022) be approved.

7 REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

Members received reports from Cabinet Members. There was an opportunity for Members to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members about matters and issues affecting their portfolios.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Tett

The Leader received comments and questions on Welcome Back funding, a Select Committee call-in, Enterprise Zones, High Wycombe Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan, Helping Hands for Ukraine, Devolution, Strategic Finance and Deprivation in areas of Bucks.

The Leader and Officer team were thanked for making great use of the Welcome Back funding for local high streets and it was emphasised that the Council was passionate about supporting local businesses and in encouraging residents to get out and make use of their local high streets.

The Leader acknowledged the Select Committee call-in of the decision taken by Cabinet in relation to the Buckinghamshire Sports and Social Club and explained that the decision was re-considered by Cabinet on 12 July, taking account of the concerns of residents and the Select Committee. Cabinet then made its decision having recognised the 5,000 people in need on the housing register and it was highlighted that the Council had a moral duty to provide housing and opportunities to families to access affordable housing in the county which this site could provide.

The Leader spoke of the tremendous success of the Enterprise Zones in Buckinghamshire and confirmed that he would be pleased to hold local ward member briefings on the Enterprise Zones, and also welcomed any questions Members may have about the zones.

In response to a query on the High Wycombe Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan, for which the High Wycombe Community Board had put a great deal of work into and a decision to be taken was outstanding, the Leader advised that he would be pleased to look at this and welcomed speaking further with the Member who raised the question.

Council gave a round of applause to all those Council employees, as well as staff from the NHS and voluntary services who had played such a vital role in supporting the Helping Hands for Ukraine scheme. The Leader noted that there would be further challenges ahead as hosts initial six-month period of providing housing came to an end.

The Leader explained that due to a number of Minister changes over the past year the Devolution Recovery deal was still with Central Government, however work remained underway to leverage investment through close partnership working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and other business groups which it was hoped would generate good well paid jobs for residents.

The Leader recognised the significant cost pressures of inflation and cost of living and advised that Senior Officers had been instructed to operate within the budget set which would mean a number of particularly tough decisions would have to be made. The staff pay budget set in February 2022 predated the significant inflation rises, and likewise capital programme spend had risen to a point that some projects were no longer viable and the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources was leading on a group to reprioritise projects. Central Government had been clear that no further in year funding would be forthcoming. The Leader would provide updates within future Cabinet Member reports and Members all had access to Cabinet Member decisions as and when they were to be taken.

Lastly, the Leader thanked the local Members for their support with the recent ward visits he had undertaken and confirmed that he is happy to meet with leaders of the opposition groups as appropriate

Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, Councillor John Chilver

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of the Desborough Road temporary housing project, 'Winslow needs green space' campaign, Chesterfield Crescent environment scheme, social housing and Council Tax rebates.

The Cabinet Member reported that the temporary housing project at Desborough Road was a great asset to the Council, providing temporary accommodation and reducing costs in costly placements. In response to an issue highlighted in respect of the colouring of concrete panels, which had been conditioned in the planning permission to be terracotta, the Cabinet Member advised that he would speak with officers from property and enforcement and provide a response to the Member who raised the question. The Cabinet Member would also advise a further member on the date residents would move into the site.

In response to a question on opening up green spaces to the public in Winslow, the Cabinet Member reported that the Winslow Centre site was to be developed and would include sporting provision and affordable housing. Public consultation would commence in the near future. The rugby field had been closed due to security and public health concerns, although this position was under regular review.

The Cabinet Member spoke of his pleasure of having met local Members and Parish Councillors to discuss options at the Chesterfield Crescent site and was currently reviewing the proposal from Wing Parish Council for an innovative environment project, on which local Members, the community and stakeholders would be consulted on.

A query was raised on the Cabinet Member's comments regarding the Buckinghamshire Sports and Social Club at a recent Cabinet meeting. The Cabinet Member clarified that the report to Cabinet confirmed that of those Members who responded, they had been supportive and his comments to Cabinet reflected that position.

The Cabinet Member affirmed his commitment to providing affordable housing with schemes having been delivered and a number in the pipeline, Tatling End had provided 40% affordable housing, whilst further schemes at the Buckinghamshire Sports and Social Club site, Winslow Centre and Horns Lane sites were being developed.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the vast majority of Council Tax rebate payments had been paid and that any outstanding would be paid by postal order commencing early August. Any future rebate payment processes would be discussed with officers, with likely a similar system in place given its success.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Steve Bowles

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of Community Boards, the Town and Parish Charter, and initiatives such as the Helping Hands project.

The Cabinet Member spoke positively of community interaction with Community Boards, with successful events having been held and the Boards proving to be an excellent demonstration of the Council's commitment to localism. The Community Boards had delivered a large number of projects that had benefitted local communities. Positive feedback had been received from applicants for the £1k grant following the application process having been improved. The process for full applications had also been reviewed to make it an easy to follow process.

In relation to TfB projects being delivered through Community Boards, Members were advised that whilst the new highways contract was under discussion all projects were on hold. The Cabinet Member invited Members to email him with individual project concerns.

The Cabinet Member reported that the Town and Parish Charter aimed to strengthen the relationship between the Council and Town / Parish Councils and the revised version had been approved by Cabinet. The Charter listed the Council's commitments and it was hoped that Towns and Parishes would sign up to the Charter. Members were invited to review the revised document when it was issued and contact the Cabinet Member with any queries.

In response to a query on the future of schemes such as Helping Hands, the Cabinet Member advised that whilst he could not comment on Government proposals, the funds that had been received had enabled the Council to provide support to approximately 12,000 eligible young people. The Cabinet Member would take this up with the local MP to lobby on the Council's behalf and was hopeful that the initiative could be extended.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Clive Harriss

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of play around the parishes, play parks, leisure facilities, country parks and the Buckingham skate park.

The Cabinet Member advised that he would investigate bringing 'Play around the Parishes' sessions to the south of the county and he would provide an update to the Member who raised the question.

In response to a query on the play park at Prebendal Farm, Aylesbury, the Cabinet Member advised that the park was inspected regularly to identify areas in need of attention. A programme was being developed to fully refurbish the park at a later date. The Cabinet Member would be happy to speak to local residents should a meeting be arranged.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources was responsible for delivering the ambitious proposals for the Winslow Sports Hub and that he too hoped that these would be delivered as soon as possible.

A Member highlighted Buckinghamshire Libraries and Action4Youth having been shortlisted in the 2022 Local Government Chronicle Awards for their partnership 'The Junction Youth Centre', a multi service drop-in centre based in High Wycombe library. The High Wycombe Community Board had funded the library refurbishment as well as Action4Youth youth workers and the Cabinet Member advised that it was an oversight not to highlight this within the report and that the Chairman of the Community Board would be invited to the awards.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Country Parks in Buckinghamshire were host to a number of activities such as walking programmes and park run and further details were on the Council website. The main issues at present were ensuring people swimming in open waters were doing so safely and that barbecues were being disposed of appropriately.

Lastly, the Cabinet Member confirmed that he was fully aware of issues affecting the delivery of the Buckingham Skate Park, which he wanted to deliver as soon as possible. The appropriate communications in respect of this would be put out through the Council's communication channels.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Councillor Gareth Williams

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of south of the county waste collections, the Council's Climate Change Strategy, tree planting schemes, the Solar Together Scheme and flood management.

In relation to waste collection in the south of the county, the following points were highlighted:

- The Cabinet Member placed on record his apologies to residents for the poor service they had experienced.
- Daily meetings had been held with Veolia, the waste contractor, and both the Cabinet Member and Leader had met with the Senior Management of Veolia to express dissatisfaction with the service and push for improvement.
- The focus was on getting crews and teams to improve their performance and bring the service to a fully operational position. An email address had been set up for Members to email in collection issues and the waste team would pick these up. There had been a number of unacceptable repeat missed collections and the team was supporting in addressing these by providing extra information such as

- aerial photographs.
- As the service returned to business as usual levels, residents were encouraged to report missed bins online. The main basis of re-organising the collection rounds was so that on occasions of missed collections, Veolia teams would be on an adjacent round the following day to return and collect the missed bin.
 - There was a break clause in the contract, although this had costs associated and all options would be explored, including insourcing.
 - The Council waste team was thanked for their work under increasing pressure, often dealing with irate residents. Assets had been redeployed, management staff were taking telephone calls, teams from across the Council were providing extra support and Veolia had brought across neighbouring contract crews to catch up on weekends.
 - A full review of the issues would be internally conducted. The Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee were also welcome to scrutinise these issues in further detail.

The interest in the Solar Together scheme was acknowledged and Members were also advised of the bid to the LEVI fund to trial a modularised hybrid Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) solution. The site would be in Wendover and if successful, this installation would predominantly use solar photovoltaic canopies with battery storage and intelligent energy management technologies to provide power to 12 charge points. It was hoped that the bid would be successful and could be rolled out elsewhere dependant on performance.

In relation to reporting progress against the Climate Change Strategy, Members were advised that there would be an annual report to Council, which would also be presented to the TECC Select Committee.

Daily meetings had been hosted by the Service Director for Communities on the impact of the high temperatures over the recent week and it was possible that a report could be produced on the impact the high temperatures had on all Council services and to highlight lessons learned.

The Cabinet Member advised that he would liaise with the planning team in respect of trees being destroyed by developers in Holmer Green, as it was thought that the trees mentioned were subject to Tree Protection Orders.

A Member highlighted the need to focus on 'avoid, reduce, restore' in addressing carbon emissions and the Cabinet Member advised that the focus was increasingly on renewable energy in the Council. The Solar Together Programme was focused on the avoidance aspect and the Council was working closely with a local charity to use DEFRA funding to encourage 30 of the biggest employers in Buckinghamshire to transition to electric vehicles.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were various aspects to the Council's tree planting initiative ranging from the planting of single trees on highway verges, through to sites managed and planted by the Forestry Commission on an industrial scale. There remained a commitment to plant a tree for every resident which required large schemes to improve biodiversity and bring flood management benefits.

In response to a concern raised in respect of heavy rain and potential flooding following extreme heat, the Cabinet Member reported that partnership working with relevant agencies continued to deal with problem sites. Utility companies were also being closely worked with and the Flood Resilience Team had visited Buckingham to raise awareness.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Angela Macpherson

The Cabinet Member advised that whilst she was committed to briefing all members on Adult Social Care reforms, the briefing which had been scheduled for the week following this meeting would be deferred until Autumn as there remained a great deal of uncertainty and she wanted to provide as much clarity as possible on such important reforms.

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of smoke free initiatives, Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, dementia, and the Integrated Care System (ICS).

It was noted that the Chairman of the ICS had authored a national review to make smoking a thing of the past, and this was acknowledged as an important report currently with Central Government awaiting their response. A host of initiatives were underway in Buckinghamshire being led by the Public Health team in partnership with the NHS. Disappointingly, smoking had increased in young people since the covid pandemic. One initiative that was underway was a local school having produced posters to display in their playground which would engage young people in the 'no smoking' message. There was opportunity for this to be rolled out further, potentially through Community Boards. There was also a 'smoke free sidelines' initiative underway to encourage parents and onlookers at recreation grounds to stop smoking whilst children were playing. The Public Health team were also aware of vaping and alternate tobacco dangers and were looking at ways to address this.

A Member advised that residents of Berryfields, Aylesbury had, whilst grateful for the new GP surgery being developed, expressed disappointment at the lack of pharmacy provision. The Cabinet Member advised that the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment which had to be done three yearly, was currently out for consultation. This had very strict conditions to follow, however residents were encouraged to respond to this online and the Council had formed a steering group to take account of all comments and requests which would be reviewed against the constraints of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.

In relation to dementia services, the Council had started its own transformation to look at how services were provided in close liaison with the Alzheimer's Society. This work was in progress and would be reported back to Council and the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee.

The ICS had been established on 1 July covering Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. Key to this was collaboration and co-operation across all partners and it was hoped that residents would not fall between gaps and the joined up services would make for a smoother pathway for people to receive services. It had been encouraging to note that central Government recognised the importance of local Government in delivering the wider determinates of public health. There was a particular focus of the ICS to focus on areas of deprivation. Mental health, particularly in children would also be a priority of the ICS.

Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Councillor Anita Cranmer

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of Adult Education courses, Ukrainian post-16 education, primary school places and assessment times for children with additional needs.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were plans to better communicate the courses ran by Adult Education. These courses were said to be an excellent tool in the levelling up programme and helped young people and adults into employment. Presently around 4,900 courses were delivered, covering leisure, special needs, help for those with disabilities and skills training courses.

In relation to options for Ukrainian guests who would be transitioning into higher education, the Cabinet Member advised that she would review this and report back to the Member who raised the question. There was an awareness that the Ukrainian Embassy had secured papers for young people to sit their exams to qualify for universities in Ukraine in certain circumstances. There was also an opportunity to link in with the post 16 education programmes in Buckinghamshire, with many schools providing extra tuition out of their own budget either for English or subject specific lessons, which could support applying for a place at a UK university, local university college, technical school or when looking at taking an apprenticeship on with local businesses. Adult Education also tied in with this with many English courses for Ukrainians having commenced.

A Member asked why the second form of entry had not yet been activated for the Abbey View Primary Academy, High Wycombe as local children were having to be transported to other schools in the wider area. The Cabinet Member explained that the admissions procedure and funding for each pupil had to be fulfilled, so school places could not be taken away from local school admission numbers to provide another year group in the new school. The Cabinet Member would share any further information with the Member who raised the question.

The Cabinet Member gave assurance that she would speak to the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West ICS to emphasise the importance of assessing children with additional educational needs and providing services in a timely manner. The Cabinet Member spoke of the SEND Ofsted inspection which required an improvement plan to be submitted, in which there was a focus on waiting lists for assessment which had not been acceptable. The Improvement Board, chaired by an independent Chairman was looking at provision in greater detail and it was acknowledged that collaboration with partners required improvement.

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services, Councillor Mark Winn

The Cabinet Member reported that as part of the Affordable Housing Statement approved by Cabinet in May, the Council has undertaken a workshop with local registered housing providers to discuss how they and the Council could work together to maximise housing delivery. Officers from housing, planning and property attended the workshop and options and opportunities moving forward were being reviewed. The Cabinet Member also advised that the Law Commission of England and Wales had published its recommendations to reform weddings law. The Council had a number of concerns in respect of these proposed changes as amongst a range of issues, they could limit opportunity to identify false marriages, require extra resources to assess sites, and require further registrar training. Until Government decided on the recommendations the service would continue on a business as usual basis.

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of rough sleeping, temporary accommodation, underage vaping and licensing issues.

In relation to rough sleeping in Buckinghamshire, the Cabinet Member advised that the 'everyone in' and 'winter refuge' programmes had come to an end. Rough sleeping numbers were volatile and there had been issues such as misbehaviour, seasonal variances and people refusing accommodation offered due to a reluctance to claim benefits which had impacted the numbers. Each rough sleeper was being targeted by outreach workers who were skilled in supporting those with additional needs such as addiction. There was supported accommodation available for those high dependency need individuals. The Council would continue to engage with rough sleepers to try and prevent homelessness as best it could. The Cabinet Member invited Members to contact him with individual cases who may refuse accommodation for reasons such as not wanting to return to an environment unsuitable for people with historic substance abuse issues so that other accommodation options could be explored.

A Member highlighted that a recent Metropolitan and Thames Valley Housing report had identified 172 properties within Aylesbury that were vacant. The Cabinet Member advised that he would review the report and assess what the Council could do in respect of the properties.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that underage vaping was an issue and urged Members to make him aware of anyone selling vapes to underage people. Work was underway to ensure consistent messaging was disseminated and the Deputy Cabinet Member was supporting developing a programme to understand how significant of an issue this was in Buckinghamshire and put in place steps to address it.

The change in licensing policy to make Town and Parish Councils statutory consultees on premises license applications was welcomed, the Cabinet Member encouraged Members to contact him with any concerns around individual cases and advised that he could arrange for officers to provide training and briefings to Town and Parish Councils. A query was also raised around delays in determining licensing applications, the Cabinet Member assured Members that he would investigate this, particularly to ensure school transport services were unaffected.

In response to a comment on the Gypsy and Traveller update contained within the report, the Cabinet Member advised that the report was factual and there was no hostility to those valued members of the community.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Peter Strachan

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report to Members that the Council was now the most active authority outside of London in terms of planning enforcement and 5th overall of local authorities in the UK.

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of Aylesbury Garden Town, High Wycombe BIDCo, and the emerging Local Plan.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that funding for Aylesbury Garden Town had been awarded, although was a reduction on the previous year. The Cabinet Member confirmed that he would continue to press for as much funding as possible, not only for Aylesbury Garden Town but for each of the planned regeneration projects in the county.

A Member spoke in support of the continuation of the High Wycombe BIDCo for the next five year term to deliver business support based initiatives that helped the town centre and its businesses thrive.

The Cabinet Member spoke of the importance of supporting local communities when it came to developments, particularly with having the right infrastructure in place. In terms of the dates noted in the update report in relation to the Local Plan, the Cabinet Member advised that he would write to the Member who raised the question to provide clarity. Further, the Cabinet Member affirmed the Council intention to prioritise brownfield site developments over greenfield.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steve Broadbent

The Cabinet Member was pleased to update Members on gully clearing progress, approximately 21,200 had been cleared which was approximately a quarter of the way through the programme. The Cabinet Member also advised that work was ongoing to bring ultra-rapid EV chargers into the county and a bid had been submitted to central Government to install fast chargers in car parks.

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions in respect of the highways capital programme, gully cleansing, EV charging points and moving traffic offences.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were cost and inflationary pressures affecting the highways capital programme, bitumen costs were up significantly over recent months as were many trace metal materials used in construction. Schemes in the capital programme were being kept as flexible as they could to ensure the best value of money was achieved in the current circumstances. The £100m investment commitment into highways over four years remained and would be shaped to be delivered in the most effective way.

It was clarified that internal combustion engine vehicles should not be using the EV charging parking spaces at the Gateway and those non EV users who were using the spaces would be given advice to stop.

A Member advised that there had been an ongoing issue with blocked gullies in Hivings Hill, Chesham, for which the Cabinet Member advised were receiving special attention as part of the larger programme of capital drainage works. An issue was also raised around diversion signs and sandbags being left on the highway after works had been completed. The Cabinet Member advised that in the last year around 1,250 fixed penalty notices were issued to utility companies for a number of reasons including not clearing the highway appropriately. If Members had specific areas of concern, they were invited to contact the Cabinet Member with specifics of the location.

The rapid EV charging point in Marlow was said to be working well, and the Cabinet Member advised that the LEVI bid had been made with an intention to extend this into other areas of the county. The 1,000 bays referred to in the EV action plan were off street bays, whilst on street work included trialling gully channels and charging from lamp posts.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to advise that the Council had been included in the first tranche of authorities to be granted Moving Traffic enforcement powers. A procurement exercise was underway for cameras and these would be installed so that enforcement activities could commence by the end of the year. There would be a six-month grace period where offenders would be given a written warning notice as opposed to a fine. It was highlighted that before cameras were moved to a new location there would be a public consultation exercise so members and residents would have opportunity to comment on appropriateness of sites.

8 NOTICES OF MOTION

Notice of Motion – Reduction of Council’s Own Emissions by 2030

The following motion had been submitted by Councillor Ed Gemmell and seconded by Councillor Adam Poland-Goodyer:

“The Council notes:

1. On page one of the Council’s Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy it states:
 - a. The Council has ‘the objective to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050’; and
 - b. ‘The council should also evaluate reaching ‘net zero’ for its own emissions no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources”

The Council believes:

1. In order to have the possibility to reach net zero for its own carbon emissions by 2030 and to understand if it has the resources to do this, the council needs firstly to understand what needs to be done, and when, in order to reach net zero for its own carbon emissions by 2030 and what this is projected to cost.

The Council resolves:

1. To require council officers to establish what steps need to be taken for the council to reach net zero for its own carbon emissions.
2. To require council officers to provide a comparison identifying when each of the established steps would need to be completed to reach net zero for each target (2030 and 2050) for the council's own emissions.
3. To require council officers to estimate the cost of reaching each target, as established in 1. and 2. of the above resolutions, on a gross basis and on an annual basis.
4. The information required in 1, 2, 3 of the above resolutions of this motion to be presented to the Transport Environment and Climate Change Committee at the planned meeting on 8 September 2022.
5. Thereafter updates on progress against the targets to be provided to the Transport Environment and Climate Change Committee in each meeting and an annual update provided to full Council."

Councillor Gemmell briefly explained the rationale behind the Motion, highlighting the past 48 hours which had seen extreme heat temperatures, resulting in fires, transport disruption and increased pressure on emergency services. Councillor Gemmell explained why he believed the Council needed to assess the costs involved to make it possible to reach net zero on carbon emissions by 2030 and set targets of where the Council expected to be at certain stages, for example in six and twelve months and to identify the practical steps that could be taken to shape the future, after which it was opened up to debate.

During the debate, Members raised a number of issues as follows:

- The Buckinghamshire Climate Change Strategy was already committed to reducing carbon emissions, with £75k spent on a carbon audit and 60 actions to be implemented noted within the strategy, which had significant investment behind it.
- Other local authorities who had set earlier net zero targets may need to utilise taxpayers' money to purchase carbon offset credits.
- The Council contributed to 0.3% of carbon emissions in Buckinghamshire, with 31% from domestic sources and 20% from businesses, and there was an intention for officers to focus on addressing these levels rather than producing numerous reports. The Council had already reduced carbon emissions by 61%.
- The need to keep the net zero target on the local and global agenda, and through carrying this motion, it would allow the Council to keep on top of costs, allow officers to innovate and keep targets under regular review.
- Concerns over the cost of climate change on residents, particularly if the net zero target was brought forward to 2030, this would affect those who were already affected by cost of living rises, inflation pressures and energy price hikes. The importance of bringing residents on the journey to net zero was highlighted.
- Technology was not yet in a position to really push the net zero target forward.
- The Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee was the right place

- for Members to scrutinise the progress made against the Climate Change Strategy.
- Whilst it was important to lead by example, changes within Buckinghamshire, would have little impact on national and global carbon emissions.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Poland-Goodyer spoke of the importance of ensuring the Council had all the information it needed to assess whether 2030 was a reachable target and what the associated costs would be compared with other targets such as 2040 and 2050.

Following the debate, the motion was voted on by a show of hands, following which, it was declared to be LOST.

RESOLVED –

That the Motion was not carried.

9 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

The written responses to questions from Members, published as a supplement to the agenda, were noted.

10 REPORT FOR INFORMATION - KEY DECISIONS REPORT

A list of decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the last Full Council meeting on 18 May 2022 were received and noted.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 4pm.