

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE AYLESBURY VALE DISTRICT COUNCIL

12 DECEMBER 2018

This meeting was webcast. To view the detailed discussions that took place please see the webcast which can be found at:

<http://www.aylesburyvaledc.publici.tv/core/portal/home>

PRESENT: Councillor S Renshell (Chairman); Councillors J Brandis (Vice-Chairman), B Adams, C Adams, M Bateman, J Bloom, A Bond, S Bowles, C Branston, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, A Christensen, A Cole, S Cole, P Cooper, B Everitt, B Foster, N Glover, M Hawkett, T Hunter-Watts, T Hussain, A Huxley, P Irwin, S Jenkins, R King, S Lambert, A Macpherson, H Mordue, R Newcombe, C Paternoster, M Rand, S Raven, B Russel, Sir Beville Stanier Bt, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Town, J Ward, W Whyte and M Winn.

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Blake, N Blake, J Chilver, M Collins, P Fealey, A Harrison, S Jarvis, R Khan, T Mills, L Monger, G Moore, S Morgan, C Poll, G Powell, W Raja, M Smith, M Stamp and A Waite.

WEBCASTING

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet and be capable of repeated viewing.

Members of the audience who did not wish to be on camera were invited to move to a marked area at the side of the chamber.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the special Council meeting held on 27 November, 2018, be approved as a correct record.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure

Food Banks – The Cabinet Member thanked AVDC staff who had recently donated to a food bank set up at the Council. Both Council staff and Members were encouraged to donate to the food bank. Donations would be collected at the Council offices on Fridays in the run up to Christmas.

(b) Leader of the Council

Unitary Council – The Leader of the Council provided Members with an update on the unitary Council. She had been meeting regularly with the District Leaders and Chief Executives to discuss transitional arrangements and would provide Members with more information as soon as practicable.

The Leader was particularly mindful of the new Council's future relationship and workings with town and parish councils and assured those councils that it was the intention of the new council to work closely with them around devolved services and the co-production of services for those who were able and wished to do so. However, until the Shadow Executive was formed it was too early to

discuss specific plans in any detail. An assurance was given to Town and Parish Councillors that no decisions had been taken. Rather, decisions would be taken by the new council and in collaboration with town and parish councils at the appropriate time.

The Leader also informed Members that there was general support for the District and Parish/Town Council elections currently scheduled for May 2019 being delayed until after the formation of the new Council. However, until the elections were officially deferred it would be prudent for parishes to continue to budget for them in their precept.

Lastly, Members were informed that the HR teams of all five Councils had been meeting to try and ensure that all staff were treated fairly and equally in the transformation to the new Council. An employee assistance programme had been introduced, free of charge, to provide staff with counselling, guidance, legal advice and other help via a Freephone number.

3. PETITIONS/DEPUTATIONS

There were none.

4. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

One written question was submitted by Members during each of October and November 2018, and could be accessed at

<http://democracy.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=441>

5. HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2019-2022

Council received a report that had been submitted to the Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee on 25 September, 2018, and to Cabinet on 20 November, 2018, seeking approval for the adoption of the draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022. The minutes of those meetings were attached as Appendices 2 and 3 respectively to the Council report. Both meetings had been supportive of the draft strategy.

Local authorities had a statutory requirement under the Homelessness Act 2002 to produce a Homelessness Review and Strategy outlining the main causes of homelessness in their area and the strategic plans and actions in place to tackle them. As a minimum requirement, the strategy should be revised and rewritten every five years.

The current strategy was due to expire this year and the new Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 (the Strategy) had been produced, following a review of the housing and homelessness needs of residents within the Vale. It outlined the Council's plan on addressing these needs for the next three years.

The Strategy had been created by a working group made up of internal officers and representatives from local partners – the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust, Aylesbury Homeless Action Group, Connection Support and the Heart of Bucks. Details of the research and customer insight undertaken to inform the Strategy were included in the Council report.

Since the draft Strategy had been published for public consultation, Universal Credit had been rolled out in the Vale and the Rough Sleeper Initiative had been implemented across the country in conjunction with the Governments target's to reduce Rough

Sleeping. The draft Strategy had been updated, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to reflect this.

Since the last Homelessness Review, changes in both local and central government legislation and policy had impacted significantly on the approach taken by local authorities to preventing and dealing with homelessness. Official statistics continued to show a worrying upward trend nationally, with the number of homelessness acceptances and rough sleepers rising year on year since 2014.

As Aylesbury Vale's population continued to rise, so did house prices and private rents. However, the Vale had also had the third highest increase in its housing stock throughout England over the last five years (source ONS 2017) and had the highest ratio of housing delivery to existing housing stock of any authority in the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Corridor. This stock increase included the delivery of 1,546 affordable homes between 2013 and 2018.

There had been a 25% increase in the number of applicants found as unintentionally homeless and in priority need since 2013, with the biggest rise being in families with dependant children. The most common reason for people losing their home was the loss of a tenancy. However, AVDC's housing staff had been extremely effective over the last few years in preventing homelessness, with 1,674 households prevented from becoming homeless between 2013 and 2017.

Compared to the national picture and in general, Aylesbury Vale's homelessness figures were relatively low, although the rough sleeping rate for 2017 (per 1,000 households) was 0.26, marginally higher than national average of 0.20.

The strategic vision was to ensure that those who wanted to make the Vale their home were supported to do so. In order to achieve this, the following 4 priorities had been agreed:

- Strategic Priority 1 – Prevent and reduce homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Strategic Priority 2 – Continue to facilitate and maximise the supply of affordable housing.
- Strategic Priority 3 – Respond to the ongoing challenges of welfare reform.
- Strategic Priority 4 – Contribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing services for people at risk of homelessness.

The Strategy Action Plan, which formed an evolving part of the strategy, set out what would be done to achieve the priorities. It would act as a health check on the effective delivery of the service and would be updated quarterly on the AVDC website once it was live.

Following an analysis of the consultation responses by the working group, the final draft of the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019 - 2022 had been produced and was attached as Appendix 1 to the Council report. The action plan would be owned by the Homelessness Prevention Forum – some ownership had already been established in some key areas whilst others would be updated in early 2019.

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member for Communities (Councillor Winn) and seconded by Councillor Bowles:-

- (1) That the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 be adopted for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.

- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Customer Fulfilment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make any necessary minor amendments to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 as may be required.

It was thereupon proposed by Councillor Bateman and seconded by Councillor Stuchbury that recommendation (1) be amended by the addition of the following:-

- (a) "That this Council will monitor the causes of homelessness within the Vale carefully, and specifically any increases in homelessness which are directly caused by or linked to Universal Credit.
- (b) That in applying development plan policy in planning decisions the Council will seek to achieve the maximum level of affordable housing taking into account suitable local evidence where available.
- (c) That the Council will seek to justify the highest level of affordable housing possible in future plans utilising all available local evidence."

During debate, the Cabinet Member for Communities informed the mover and seconder of the amendment that he was happy to accept that AVDC would continue to monitor the causes of homelessness within the Vale carefully, and specifically any increases in homelessness that were caused by or linked to the roll out of Universal Credit.

The Cabinet Member also stated that he was happy to give an undertaking that if there were opportunities that came forward in a particular development to build a higher level of affordable housing, the Council would consider them.

On the basis of these undertakings, and with the agreement of the mover and seconder of the amendment, and of Council, the amendment was withdrawn.

Following further debate, it was,

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 be adopted for inclusion in the Council's Policy Framework.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director for Customer Fulfilment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, to make any necessary minor amendments to the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-2022 as may be required.

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

A report, similar to that submitted to the General Purposes Committee on 19 November 2018, and summarised in the Minutes of that meeting, concerning the final recommendations emanating from the Community Governance Review, was submitted.

Community Governance Reviews were the successor to Parish Reviews. The terms of reference of this review had been:-

- (i) **Great Brickhill and Soulbury Parishes** – to consult with electors in relation to the current boundary between Great Brickhill and Soulbury Parishes which runs along Ivy Lane, to the south of Great Brickhill. This will include consulting with areas about whether they should be included within the Great Brickhill or Soulbury Parish. The affected properties are:

- Clover Hill.
- The Stables.
- Alders Farm.

- (ii) **Bierton with Broughton Parish** - to consult with electors in the Parish in relation to possible warding arrangements to take account of the Aylesbury East 'Kingsbrook' development.
- (iii) **All Parishes** – the number of Parish Councillors.
- (iv) **All Parishes** – any minor boundary alterations.

The report recommendations had been framed in accordance with the consideration given to the feedback from the formal consultation process by the General Purposes Committee. Details of the comments expressed were included in the report submitted.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs Macpherson, seconded by Councillor C Adams and

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the current boundary between Great Brickhill and Soulbury Parishes be maintained.
- (2) That new Wards of “Kingsbrook” and “ Broughton Hamlet” be created within the Bierton with Broughton Parish (as shown on the map submitted with the Council report) to take account of the Aylesbury East 'Kingsbrook' development.
- (3) That the number of Parish Councillors for the new Bierton with Broughton Parish be set to 12 as follows:-

Ward Name	Number of Councillors
Bierton Ward	7
Kingsbrook Ward	3
Oldhams Meadow (unchanged)	1
Broughton Hamlet	1

- (4) That the membership of Mentmore Parish Council be increased from 5 to 7.
- (5) That the membership of Pitstone Parish Council be increased from 10 to 11.
- (6) That the membership of Berryfields Parish Council be reduced from 12 to 10.
- (7) That the Lead Legal and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make a reorganisation order under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, to implement the changes as a result of this review.
- (8) That the Democratic Manager be authorised to take any further action that might be necessary to complete the review and implement the new arrangements.

7. QUESTION TIME

Members had the opportunity to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members and Committee Chairmen about issues affecting their portfolios/Committee activities:-

- (a) **Devolving assets to Town and Parish Councils** (Councillor C Adams) – the Leader of the Council informed Members that until the final reorganisation order was laid for the new Council it was premature to make any firm statements on matters moving forward, which included looking at the devolution of assets and services to Town and Parish Councils.
- (b) **Roadworks / Traffic Congestion** (Councillor Cooper) – the Deputy Leader of the Council informed Members that he shared Councillor Cooper’s concerns on the number of temporary traffic lights and unplanned roadworks that seemed to be popping up on main arterial roads around Aylesbury and that were causing considerable traffic congestion and gridlock. However, the Deputy Leader had not received any complaints or evidence that the congestion was impacting on the economy of Aylesbury. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure (who was also the Deputy Cabinet Member for Transport at BCC) informed Members that the County Council shared the same concerns and had contacted Thames Water to raise the matter and complain about the disruptions.
- (c) **Aylesbury Vale Estates** (Councillor Lambert) – the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure assured Members that there no plans to move AVDC controlled assets into AVE ownership so that they could not be transferred to either the new Council or Town/Parish Councils.
- (d) **Email Sharing Protocols** (Councillor Lambert) – the Leader of the Council informed Members that she expected the Member / Officer protocol regarding the sharing of information to be followed. The Leader was happy to speak to the Member after the meeting if he had any particular concerns.
- (e) **Discounted Housing Payments** (Councillor Bateman) – the Cabinet Member for Communities gave an undertaking to provide the Member with information on whether there had recently been any increases in discounted housing payments.
- (f) **Osier Way, Buckingham** (Councillor Stuchbury) – the Cabinet Member for Planning and Enforcement informed the Member that he had emailed him today with information in relation to Section 106 arrangements. Arrangements had not yet been put in place but the Member would be notified as soon as something had been agreed.
- (g) **Unitary Council** (Councillor Stuchbury) – the Leader of the Council informed Members that it was important for all Councils to continue with business as usual for local residents until such stage as arrangements for the Shadow Authority and/or the new Council came into force.
- (h) **Merry Christmas** (Councillor Rand) – the Leader of the Council concurred with the Member in wishing all Members of staff, Councillors and their families a very Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year.
- (i) **Buckingham Christmas Parade** (Councillor Whyte) – the Cabinet Member for Civic Amenities agreed with the Member that AVDC was happy to support the Buckingham Christmas parade this Saturday by offering free parking in the town.

The Cabinet Member also informed Members that AVDC was again this year providing free parking on Thursdays after 3.30pm in AVDC town centre car parks in the run up to Christmas and every Sunday in December in the Walton Street car park.