

**County Council Update
from County Cllr Anne Wight
June 2019**

VAHT and BCC Grass Cutting Discussions

As some residents are already aware, the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (VAHT) had been cutting swathes of grass verges in and around the Aylesbury Vale area historically for quite some time. However, it was recently decided that as some of the grass areas were found to belong to Bucks County Council, VAHT took the decision to cease cutting immediately and without having first informed BCC of this decision.

This has resulted in overgrown grass in many areas around the whole of Aylesbury Vale, as BCC has only recently been informed of this decision and therefore was unable to allocate budget to undertake any additional grass cutting.

Discussions are now ongoing between BCC and VAHT as to how to resolve this issue. I have raised it with Cllrs Steven Lambert and Angela Macpherson, both on the board of the VAHT last week, both in email and in person on behalf of my residents who are badly affected by this sudden and poorly communicated decision on the part of VAHT. I have been told that some grass cutting would occur over the past weekend by VAHT, while discussions were ongoing between BCC and VAHT regarding the plan going forward.

I will keep the parish councils informed as to the outcome of those discussions as soon as I have more information on that.

The Brownlow Bridge

The TTRO is now in place on the Brownlow Bridge in Ivinghoe which prohibits vehicles over 18 tonnes from using the bridge. While this has been well publicized locally and parish councils are all informed of this, sadly some local hauliers are continuing to use the bridge despite the clear signage.

Ivinghoe Parish Council are monitoring this situation with cooperation from the residents of Horton as well and Thames Valley Police have been informed of the situation. Where possible, photo evidence has been provided, particularly where repeat offending is occurring.

Anyone wishing to express a view on the long term outlook for the bridge is welcome to do so via email at the following email address:

freight@buckscc.gov.uk

Planning applications CM/0017/19 and CM/0018/19

These planning applications are for additional industrial waste processing of 25,000 tonnes and 87,500 tonnes respectively per annum on the Marsworth/Cheddington Airfield Industrial Estate and are currently open for comment from members of the public.

Should anyone wish to comment, simply use the link below, press the view application button, and input the application number you wish to comment on into the search bar. There is then an option to upload the comment.

Both of these applications are due to come to the Development Control Committee for decision on 1st July, 2019.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/environment/planning/viewing-planning-applications/>

Local Government Reorganisation

The final piece of legislation that seals the deal for a new unitary authority was passed by government on 24 May. For the people and businesses of Buckinghamshire, this will mean one, brand new council from April 2020, delivering all local government services. The new council will replace the current five councils – Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Chiltern District Council, South Bucks District Council and Wycombe District Council - which will cease to exist on 31 March 2020.

The legislation from government, known as the Buckinghamshire Structural Changes Order, sets out the details of the new council and how the current five councils will come together to create it over the next year. In summary:

- The new council will be known as Buckinghamshire Council
- It will have 147 elected members; elections to the new council will take place in May 2020

- A temporary Shadow Authority will be formed, with all current county and district councillors having a seat on this body
- Leadership will be provided by a 17 seat Shadow Executive of county and district members
- An implementation team, led by the County Council Chief Executive and with a district Chief Executive as deputy, will be established to manage the smooth transfer of services and staff to the new council

Now the Order has been approved, all county and district councillors from the five councils will come together to create a Shadow Authority that will oversee the move to the new council. The Shadow Authority comprises 236 seats, filled by 202 individuals taking into account those councillors who are both a county and district councillor. The date of the first meeting of the Shadow Authority will be confirmed on Friday 24 May.

At its first meeting, the Shadow Authority is consulted on the appointment of the statutory officers on an interim basis; the head of paid service, monitoring officer and chief finance officer. They will also appoint members to relevant committees and confirm the nominated county and district members to the Shadow Executive.

The Shadow Executive will oversee the implementation plan for the new council, and will consist of 17 county and district councillors; eight from the county council, eight from the four district councils, and the Leader of the County Council as the Leader of this group, supported by a district councillor as the Deputy Leader.

The Shadow Authority will also be responsible for setting the 2020/21 council tax and first budget of the new unitary council which will take place in the new year.

The Shadow Authority will run alongside the current five councils until April 2020, and it is the responsibility of the current councils to continue to deliver services as usual until they transfer to the new council on 1 April 2020.

The first meeting of the Shadow Authority will be held on 3rd June in Wycombe and I will be attending.

More information on the Shadow Authority can be found on its new website below:

<https://shadow.buckinghamshire.gov.uk>

Resident Survey

Local people are being asked for their views on Buckinghamshire's highways and transport services – from the condition of roads and footpaths to the quality of cycling facilities. Their answers will be compared with the views of other members of the public across England and Scotland, thanks to the National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey.

Buckinghamshire County Council is one of 111 local authorities to sign up to a standardised survey that will ask members of the public exactly the same questions, whether they live in Bedford, Bristol or Buckinghamshire.

The survey, which is being run for the tenth year is the largest collaboration between local authorities offering the opportunity to compare results, share in best practice and identify further opportunities to work together in the future.

The questionnaire will be sent to a minimum random sample of at least 3,300 of Buckinghamshire's residents from 7 June, followed by a reminder, with local and national results to be published in late October 2019. Since the survey is based on a sample, residents that receive a copy are being urged to take part.

Residents that receive the questionnaire can complete the survey on line if they prefer, a short URL link will be printed on the front of the questionnaire and they will be required to enter a code before completing the questionnaire.

The results will enable us to find out what local people think about these important services. This will provide one of several ways Buckinghamshire County Council can assess how it is performing. It gives the public an opportunity to say which services they think the Council should prioritise, and improve.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Transport Member, Mark Shaw, said:

"There are a number of clear benefits to conducting a public survey in this way. As well as providing excellent value for money, it also enables everyone involved to identify areas of best practice and spot national, regional and local trends. This is not about producing a league table to champion one geographical area or local authority over another; it is about understanding customer views better and working together to deliver the most satisfactory yet efficient outcomes for local residents.

"Already this year, we have spent £4 million delivering our Plane and Patch scheme, covering over 150 roads. We have seen the successful launch of our road resurfacing programme, the implementation of RingGo payment for parking in Aylesbury and the completion of our LED replacement programme for our streetlights, with 3,295 of the old style lanterns being successfully converted with LED equipment. Looking ahead to the rest of the year, we will be spending £500,000 on weed spraying, carrying out four urban grass cuts across the county and working on a number of significant schemes, including drainage and traffic signals works within the next few weeks.

"We are committed to understanding and responding to the views of the public. The survey will aid us in doing just that."

- The National Highways and Transport (NHT) Network is a unique collaboration between Local Authorities across England and parts of Scotland with a common agenda – service improvement.

The Network provides an environment in which members can measure their own performance, compare with their peers and identify areas for improvement.

- The NHT Network and the Public Satisfaction Survey are managed by performance management specialists, measure2improve, the NHT Network administrators
- The survey is being carried out on behalf of the participating Local Authorities by market research specialist, Ipsos MORI.
- Participation in the survey is voluntary. It is believed to be the first survey of its kind to bring together so many separate highway authorities from all over England and parts of Scotland to carry out their surveys in a comparable format
- The survey questionnaire is a 12 pages long and covers all aspects of local highway and transport services (e.g. from the condition of roads and footways to Road Safety and Cycling). The questionnaire should be completed in around 15 minutes.
- Residents that receive the questionnaire in the post may opt to complete the questionnaire on line if they prefer.

