

**County Council Update
from County Councillor Anne Wight
May 2018**

The “Minded to” Decision for a Single Unitary for Buckinghamshire

As you may have heard, former Local Government Secretary, Sajid Javid, has stated that he is minded to create a single unitary authority in Buckinghamshire.

It's important to be clear that - should the government take a final decision to implement a single unitary - the result would be **a brand new council to replace the existing five district and county councils across Buckinghamshire**. An Implementation Executive (made up of elected members from each of the existing five councils) would be established to work together to lead the preparations for the new council and make decisions about future arrangements.

Key benefits of a unitary council for town and parish councils:

- **A flexible partnership offer** that reflects the differing sizes, geographies and resources of parish and town councils – more choice about which assets and services (if any) you take on, together with a package of funding and support to allow this to be sustainable and successful.
- **A more responsive agile service:** service delivery based locally through community hubs, able to respond more quickly to local requests and your needs for any changes in service delivery.
- **Greater local influence, choice and decision making - putting real decision-making power in the hands of local people:** a new network of community boards with powers and budget to take decisions for local areas, providing greater scope to represent residents in decision-making on the future of local services.
- **The opportunity to take even greater ownership for the local environment,** with associated opportunities to generate local employment.
- **Higher levels of public satisfaction** as a result of enabling services to be more tailored to meet local needs through this approach.
- **More substantial roles** to attract candidates to join the local council.

The New Council would mean considerable scale economies from not having duplicate services (e.g. bin collection and waste disposal handled by different councils), and would eliminate a lot of the confusion as to which council is responsible for which service.

Communities will be free to take on the role they want in the services that matter to them, and will not be given accountabilities they don't want and assets they don't need.

We are encouraging people to write to the Secretary of State ---now James Brokenshire---to confirm their support for this opportunity to make local government in Buckinghamshire sustainable and fit for the future. The new council will save £45m over five years, offer better value to tax payers and be far simpler for them to do business with than the current model of five county and district councils. We are very grateful for the views and contributions to the debate that people have provided so far, and look forward to continuing our discussions to develop the detail of the future approach.

Please show your support for the change by writing to:

james.brokenshire@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Potholes and Damaged Road Surfaces

I am pleased to say that at the Full Council meeting last month Buckinghamshire County Council voted to release £1.234m of County Council reserves to supplement existing funding to provide for predominately high quality plane and patch type repairs.

This will be in addition to the £1.1 m of funding for pothole repairs which has been given to Bucks County Council by the national government.

I was out recently with our Local Area Technician to survey the road surfaces across our Division and we are putting together a plan as to how we can best use this money to restore our local roads to good condition.

I am also aware of the flooding issue under the Cooks Wharf Bridge and the LAT and I went out to see that as well. Although the surface water has now been dealt with and the gullies have been unblocked, we will be looking at some of the longer term runoff and drainage issues which led to the flooding to see if we can ensure that sufficient drainage is in place to prevent it recurring.

My Question on Freight Strategy to Cabinet Member from his Report to Full Council, as taken from the public record on the Bucks County Council website.

Questions to the Cabinet Member for Transportation from Ms A Wight:

Q: I would just like to say that I know my residents thoroughly welcome the Cabinet Member's initiative in providing Buckinghamshire with a Freight Strategy. As HGVs on narrow rural roads are causing my residents many concerns regarding road safety, traffic congestion during the school run, and loss of amenity, they are keen to know whether the final form of the Freight Strategy will include any form of enforcement, as is the case in our neighbouring counties of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire?

A: Thank you for your support throughout the consultation. Once we have published the Freight Strategy, we will be investigating the problems in rural areas that have been raised through the consultation to seek possible solutions and develop an action plan. This could include enforcement action as a last resort when other solutions are not possible and budget allows. I am pleased that Council agreed resources to implement the Freight Strategy which includes a new designated Freight Officer position, as well as over £700k for physical measures over the next four years.

Traffic Calming Feasibility Study

After EPC's request to modify the study specifications somewhat, our TfB officers responded to say that they felt that would be possible. Simon Garwood of our Local Area Forum will contact Penny Pataky with a view to setting up a meeting between EPC, BCC and TfB to discuss the preferred options. I have highlighted the desirability of expediting the feasibility study if possible, and TfB are now aware of this and hope to be able to prioritise it somewhat.

National Paralympic Heritage Trust Chairman and Trustee Recruitment

The National Paralympic Heritage Trust, which was established on 11th November 2015, exists to enlighten and inspire future generations by celebrating, cherishing and bringing the Paralympic heritage and its stories of human endeavour to life.

The NPHT is looking to appoint up to three independent Trustees, ideally with an understanding of, and access to, important networks or contacts in the sport and/or heritage sectors, who are also committed to NPHT aims and values, and to equality and diversity.

They are specifically looking for people with skills and experience in one of the following areas:

- Culture and heritage sector - including collections and archives, and engagement in particular.
- Fundraising experience - particularly in the cultural sector.

- Finance experience - ideally with a formal financial qualification to support sound financial management within the Trust.

Closing Date - Applications should be received by Monday 2nd July 2018.
Interviews will take place in July.

For more information or to apply, please download the Trustee welcome pack here or request one by email at vicky.hopewalker@paralympicheritage.org.uk

For an informal discussion, please contact: Emma Boggis, one of the current member appointed Trustees, on 0207 976 3941
or eboggis@sportandrecreation.org.uk

Do please also check out the NPHT website at the link below:
<https://www.paralympicheritage.org.uk/news/trustees-at-npht>

Grass Cutting Schedule

For information on grass cutting schedules, please see the link below. Depending on parish agreements for devolved services, some grass cutting may be the responsibility of the parishes.

<https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/transport-and-roads/road-maintenance-and-repairs/grass-cutting/>

Anaerobic Digester

In response to the query at the last Local Area Forum meeting on the anaerobic digester at Westcott, I have been informed that over the last month the owners of the Westcott facility have been in contact with BCC about their intention to sell this facility. BCC only recently had it confirmed that it has been sold to Olleco, who already operate a similar facility next to the Arla factory just off the A41. Officers at Buckinghamshire County Council have since held a meeting with Olleco and from their early conversations it seems that to date there are no intentions to close the facility at Westcott.

For more information there are some article links below

<https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/olleco-buys-aylesbury-plant-renewi/>

<http://www.renewiplc.com/en/newsroom/news-releases-archive/2018/29-03-2018>