

**Author: Cameron Branston
District Councillor
Grendon Underwood & Brill Ward**

This has been a busy year for Aylesbury Vale District Council. Last summer we elected a new leader, Cllr Angela Macpherson. Angela is the first female to lead the Council.

Within AVDC I have been asked to take on more responsibility including chairing the Economic and Business Development Committee which scrutinises reports, business plans and reviews the long term investment strategy of the District Council. I chaired a cross party group that developed new protocols and procedures regarding council formed companies. This follows a report done by BDO on the running of AVB a wholly-subsiary of AVDC. Councillors were keen to ensure that we learnt from the mistakes made with AVB.

I continue to work with parish councils and residents to ensure that AVDC responds to their concerns. Navigating the bureaucracy and ensuring that AVDC officers are responsive to residents' concerns and continues to be a formidable challenge.

When required I asked for planning applications to be heard before the Development Control Management Committee to support the community.

Unitary Council

The four district councils and the county council will form one Buckinghamshire unitary council across the county excluding Milton Keynes. A shadow authority is to be created, which will run until next year. Elections for the new council are scheduled for May 2020. Electoral divisions are to be called Wards. The new wards will be based on the current county divisions each represented by three councillors. In total residents in Buckinghamshire will collectively elect 147 councillors in the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Council.

Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

At present AVDC officers are finalising modifications to VALP before these are sent to the Inspector for his approval prior to public consultation, which will be in May/June. There will be a seminar for Parish Councils across the Vale. Once the Inspector approves the plan this should allow the Vale to plan for growth rather than have developers determine where growth should occur.

AVDC continues to have a five year land supply which puts the council in a strong position to resist unwanted development.

East West Rail

The public inquiry into the Transport and Works Act orders related to the western section of the Bicester to Bedford route opened on 6 February 2019. A key concern/theme for local authority objections is the impact on the local highway network during construction.

The East West Rail company is currently undertaking a consultation on route options for the central section from Bedford to Cambridge. The Consortium has recently published its prospectus for the eastern section from Cambridge to Ipswich and Norwich. The Consortium is also looking at developing rail services along the Northampton – Milton Keynes- Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common

axis. It is anticipated that HS2 will release capacity on the West Coast Main Line. Connectivity is very important for East West Rail, which intersects with the West Coast Main Line, the Midland Main Line and the East Coast Main Line.

HS2

Both AVDC and BCC have unanimously passed motions asking the government to suspend all enabling work until the government issues an official 'notice to proceed'. Councillors from all parties commented on the environmental damage taking place in the Buckinghamshire countryside.

Aylesbury Garden Town

The Masterplan will be out for consultation in May/June. AVDC is keen to support the development of Aylesbury and its achievement as a Garden Town is pivotal to help secure the economic life of the town and its surrounding area.

Oxford to Cambridge Expressway

The consultation on route options will go out to public consultation towards the end of 2019, with the choice of route being made in spring 2020.

Waste Services

Recycling rate remains around 54%. The government has published the latest 2017/18 statistics on waste managed by English local authorities.

Aylesbury Vale appears in 14th place out of the top 20 authorities, for the largest percentage increase in household waste sent for Recycling, Reuse, or Composting during 2017/18. The figure was 54.1%, which is a 3.8% improvement on 2016/17.