

# Aylesbury Vale Advantage

## The Eighteenth Meeting of the AVA Board Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2008

### Minutes

#### Present:-

Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher, Adrian Brown, Cllr John Cartwright, Richard Harrington, Cllr Valerie Ann Letheren, Richard Mills, Oona Muirhead, Cllr Carole Paternoster, Alex Pratt, Cllr Alan Sherwell, Adrian Shooter, Cllr Martin Tett, Patricia Ward

#### Also in attendance:-

Graham Aylett, Simon Bishop, Hilary Chipping, Chris Coles, Neil Gibson, Andrew Grant, Julie Hopkins, Peter Howson, Ian McGowan, Steve Mitchell, Gareth Ralphs, Kathy Russell, Liz Thomas, Chris Woolf

#### Apologies:-

John Lewis, David Paine

Item	Action Points	Actions
	The Chairman welcomed Hilary Chipping (MKSM Director) and Chris Woolf (GOSE) to the meeting.	
1.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest.	
2.	<b>Minutes and matters arising from meetings held 25<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> April 2008</b>  Oona Muirhead referred to the sentence about renewable energy in the minutes of 25 <sup>th</sup> February and suggested 'renewable regeneration sources can fluctuate' would be more appropriate wording.  <b>It was RESOLVED:-</b> <b>Both sets of minutes were agreed subject to the above alteration</b>	
3.	<b>Matters Arising</b>  No points were raised.	
4.	<b>Project Approval – Aylesbury Electricity Capacity</b> Richard Harrington gave an overview of the paper which outlines ARUP's report to AVDC and seeks approval to commit up to £3m of the GAF3 allocation to a preferred option. Members were asked to approve AVA involvement in a consortium approach to increase the electricity supply capacity of Aylesbury to meet growth plans.	

The default position of 'do nothing' has been discounted. Of the three possible options two approaches are being considered:

Aylesbury-led – a single Independent Distribution Network Operator (IDNO) would be selected to own and operate the substation(s) and provide connections to all new developments.

Developer-led – each developer would engage an IDNO for its own site, leaving EDF to own and operate the substation(s).

It was recommended that both options be kept open at this stage. Members were asked for their comments:

- It was asked what would happen should costs exceed £3m. Investment would be capped and the rest raised from developers. This will not affect S106, it is understood to be state aid compliant and therefore EDF would derive no uncompetitive advantage.
- EDF have a preference to be the IDNO and are prepared to work with AVA to move quickly.
- Oona Muirhead suggested that renewables should be built into the brief from the start.
- Richard Harrington has met with developers to discuss issues with the development-led approach and cost assumptions in the ARUP report.
- Another high level meeting with EDF and the development consortium to be held. Next steps to include keeping the proposals alive, discussing Heads of Terms and engaging with the Agencies.
- Concern was raised that EDF would not move quickly enough and also the impact that the housing market downturn could have.
- Martin Tett asked whether cash flow would influence preference between options and what the implications to AVA may be. EDF would make a contribution upfront but an IDNO would want to match investment with value release from housing connections. The implication is that the IDNO route may be more costly but may also give greater control.
- Adrian Shooter said he supported the Aylesbury-led option but asked what would happen if EDF refused to make investment to connect, is there a statutory requirement that EDF has to provide connection to an IDNO. Investment would include distribution network/infrastructure.
- ARUP recommends the Aylesbury-led option as this would give AVA more control, the risks however may be higher.
- From a risk assessment point of view, the developer-led option is the most likely. Advice needs to be sort on whether an OJEU process would need to be undertaken.
- Alex Pratt asked whether the Local Authority partners welcomed the plan. Andrew Grant responded that the whole Board needs to be content with the decision to invest.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alex Pratt asked about the risks involved with investing £3m of GAF funding. It is necessary to take some calculated risk as Berryfields and the Town Centre is stagnating. It was proposed that a risk assessment be done.</li> <li>• Adrian Brown asked whether the GAF money would be recovered by tariff. Those who have planning permission would enter into a contractual agreement to repay for the electricity infrastructure as the S106 will already be signed. Those developments not consented and planned for the future would pay a proportion of the cost via tariff/schedule of charges.</li> <li>• Electricity capacity levels are currently at their maximum. Adrian Brown asked whether the issue with the house building market could in fact give more time. Richard Harrington responded that is undoubtedly a growth blocker and that new capacity will be a future requirement of both housing and employment uses. This therefore presented a good opportunity to ensure capacity supply issues would no longer register as a growth limiter in buoyant market conditions. Aston Clinton Road was lost in part to electricity and the Gatehouse project is also dependent on electricity supply, delay should therefore be avoided.</li> <li>• Alex Pratt asked if we could leverage the £3m to gain more money back. It is not intended to make a profit but the likelihood of securing a return would be considered.</li> <li>• Simon Bishop said the aim should be to get on the same level playing field as the rest of the country.</li> <li>• AVA is fully funded by CLG which is a pertinent point. Andrew Grant asked if it would be possible to ask for £6m upfront. GAF has not yet allocated all its resources and there will potentially be other funds available following the Programme of Development refresh. It was also suggested that additional funding from private companies could be sought.</li> </ul> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:-</b></p> <p><b>The Board agreed to allocate up to £3m GAF3 funds to promote either a Developer-led or an Aylesbury led solution</b></p>	
5.	<p><b>Programme Team Reports</b></p> <p><b><u>Infrastructure</u></b> Liz Thomas gave a verbal report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian McGowan of Buckinghamshire County Council is on secondment to AVA and will work on developing an infrastructure business plan. There will be close co-operation with the Executive Management Board regarding milestones.</li> <li>• The Buckinghamshire Infrastructure Study Phase 1 recommended that the locations for growth deal with infrastructure on a S106 basis.</li> <li>• It also recommended that the infrastructure needs of wider</li> </ul>	

Aylesbury and the district should be tackled by drawing up a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will later come into play which could impact on an SPD for the rest of the district.
- Key issues to resolve include transport schemes and prioritisation of highway design/flooding.
- The LDF is an important strategic document which will have a major impact on infrastructure. Work is underway with BCC and AVDC on taking forward the BIS recommendations. It is likely that further work on development viability will need to be undertaken.
- Further work will also be needed regarding potential funding streams and developer contributions.
- Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) may be a key candidate for future infrastructure funding. MKSM promotes front funding for key infrastructure items. Hilary Chipping encouraged the Board to support MKSM in their position. Richard Harrington added that it is important to work with MKSM on the implementation strategy going forward as this may help deliver the infrastructure needed for the A418 and East West Rail projects.
- GAF3 funds allocated to the Eastern Link Road development will feed into the programme of work moving forward. The link road fund is strategically important to successful growth in Aylesbury Vale.
- An adopted Local Development Framework (LDF) in Aylesbury is key to identifying and resolving the infrastructure issues.

### **Housing**

Board Champion Carole Paternoster presented a housing update report.

- 86% of the Housing Trajectory target has been achieved over an initial seven year period.
- 1174 completions are forecast this year which will bring Aylesbury within 9% of the 8 year cumulative target.
- There are approximately 7,000 units with planning consent of which just 936 are under construction.
- Some delays in delivery have occurred but it should be noted that for apartments a whole block completion is required before the units are counted, this impacts on the trajectory. The cooling of the market is also having an effect.
- LDF – The AVDC Cabinet will look at the East or South, or hybrid East/South options shortly.
- There will be a public consultation later this Autumn and the feedback will be incorporated in the core strategy which will also include allocated strategic sites.
- Aylesbury has a five year land supply of 5.3 years.
- 5390 homes (South West development area Milton Keynes) fall within Aylesbury Vale. BCC and AVDC will lead on the planning and implementation of this development. AVA to work with the local authorities. There will be a great deal of cross

boundary working with Milton Keynes Partnership, Milton Keynes Council and Bucks County Council in relation to the delivery of transport and education.

- Martin Tett highlighted the need to emphasise AVDC/BCC/AVA are taking the lead in terms of support to the delivery of the Newton Longville strategic development area. MKSM see a need for strong influence, it is important to be clear as to what is envisaged for the area.
- Hilary Chipping informed that Aylesbury Vale is doing better in terms of housing delivery than some parts of MKSM but not so well as others.
- Val Letheren questioned whether there were too many flats in Aylesbury. Carole Paternoster informed that the buy-to-let market had dropped and the mortgage famine is having an effect not just on flats but across the board.
- Alex Pratt asked if permissions were indicative of the plan in place to support numbers and what could be done to get on target. The target will grow as the numbers increase in 2011-2026, this will be challenging.
- Richard Harrington outlined the future programme team role which will include managing the housing trajectory, engaging with developers and looking to alleviate blockages to delivery.
- Adrian Shooter referred to the electricity issue and other blockages. These must be cleared and developers encouraged to move forward once the market improves.
- Adrian Brown highlighted that large developments such as Berryfields take longer and are more complicated. We need to look more pragmatically at how to roll out development in the future by facilitating development which can be delivered in smaller tranches rather than one big scheme at a time.
- Ecotowns - Oona Muirhead asked how these would affect the trajectory. Concern had been expressed at the SEERA Committee that infrastructure funds for Aylesbury would be diverted to ecotowns.
- Hilary Chipping relayed that Sir Bob Kerlake is excited about growth across MKSM. MKSM are to have a leading person within the HCA which is taking over growth. The post of Regional Director will be advertised and this person will have good contact with all LDVs. This is a great opportunity to bring MKSM up the agenda.
- Richard Harrington informed that English Partnerships has invested heavily in the growth agenda. It is important to plan for the future through the LDF and liaise with the HCA immediately to unlock opportunities. There are large gaps in infrastructure provision which the HCA can help to address.

### **Economic Development**

Gareth Ralphs presented the report.

A refresh of both the Buckinghamshire and Aylesbury Economic Development Strategy is underway.

Members were asked for their support of the ten areas listed in the report which are to be built upon. A discussion followed with the following comments made:

- The list is confusing, simple and clear objectives are needed with defined targets.
- Job retention should be focussed on. Alan Sherwell informed that there are concerns that HMRC staff at Kingfisher House are moving out of the area, this does not give a coherent message.
- Net job growth trajectory – it was asked if this intelligence was available. Land study/Engage are currently working on a baseline/trajectory.
- Industrial mix – we need to think about the type of jobs we want to create. What is the compelling vision?
- Size/sector - Aylesbury is perfect for small companies. Larger companies are more likely to go to places like High Wycombe. We need to look at the transport/infrastructure we have.
- Marketing/item branding – it is difficult to market what Aylesbury has to offer. Andrew Grant said he thought the market intelligence available was inadequate and the private sector should be encouraged to contribute financially and intellectually to grow and drive job creation. Richard Mills suggested lead partners should use their influence and local employers could get involved.
- Alex Pratt questioned what do we want Aylesbury to be, have we got an employment site strategy, and where is land that can be unlocked. It is important to create space for innovative companies.
- Oona Muirhead suggested that we need to describe why Aylesbury matters and why it's important for particular types of employment. We should identify three things that matter.
- The allocation of employment sites will be included in the LDF.
- It is important to accelerate not duplicate work and for the various bodies to work together. The audit will help engage with external Economic Development agencies.
- MKSM investment – we need to draw attention to the assets that will create employment opportunities. There are common problems across MKSM however the Vale does have operational advantages and standards should be set high.
- The jobs trajectory is an important aspect and technical work needs to be done to underpin this. Cross boundary working with Milton Keynes will be important.
- Carole Paternoster informed that the Economic Development Strategy had been deferred going to Cabinet as, although it is fully supportive, more information is sought. The report will be put back to another meeting.
- Richard Harrington reminded that the Economic Development Programme Team is the least developed and we need to be practical in our approach due to limited human resources.
- Alex Pratt highlighted that labour and space in the area is

inexpensive. Aylesbury is one of the most innovative areas within close proximity to London. The area has the highest start up rate with low unemployment. We are in a good position.

- It was agreed that Economic Development will be a key item on the agenda at the Board Away Day on 4<sup>th</sup> August.

**It was RESOLVED:-**

**The Board noted the report**

**Town Centre**

Richard Harrington opened the discussion. The programme team will focus on three main areas:

- 1) the implementation plan for the EDAW Town Centre Vision Framework Document.
- 2) creating a leadership group with stakeholder interest.
- 3) the opportunity for direct funding of projects to, for example, the public realm, masterplan and urban design.

The Board report was discussed and the following points raised:

- A vision, not a planning policy, sets the framework.
- There needs to be greater clarity as to what is achievable.
- Strategic direction is needed around the large schemes, larger sites will contribute to achieving a better town centre offer going forward.
- The public realm should feed into the key strategy. Neil Gibson welcomed the commissioning of the public realm strategy which will influence lighting, street signage etc
- It is important to move forward with the EDAW work and not start to replan.
- Economic development, jobs and the public realm are drivers of growth around the edge of town.
- The programme team is drawn from BCC and AVDC, the body needs to be properly constituted.
- Stakeholder interest – it was suggested the team should draw on experience of groups who have ownership in the town centre and listen to input from the wider community.
- There was concern that a larger team would constrain debate, the Chairman suggested open and closed sessions could be a solution.
- Alan Sherwell said he was concerned at the lack of link between the Programme Team and the Town Council and suggested that Board Champion Adrian Brown could have a conversation with Town Centre Members/Officers to discuss how they can have proper involvement.
- AVA's role is to ensure there is a genuine buy-in and to create an Aylesbury to be proud of.

	<p><b><u>Environment</u></b> Board Champion Alan Sherwell presented the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Waste</u> - there were presentations on waste by Marcus Rogers (BCC) and the Environment Agency at the team's last meeting. Construction waste is not biodegradable and needs to be tackled.</li> <li>• <u>Zero carbon</u> – the team will address the implications and review how to move things on.</li> <li>• <u>Green Infrastructure</u> - Oona Muirhead noted that Green Infrastructure was the focus of the report and that attention to the sustainability element would also be welcomed.</li> <li>• Carole Paternoster is supportive of Whaddon Chase and asked if this could tie in with Milton Keynes green infrastructure.</li> <li>• Grand Union Canal – Carole Paternoster asked if the Wendover Arm could be included in addition to the Aylesbury Arm. This was agreed.</li> </ul>	
6.	<p><b>GAF3 Project Update</b> Liz Thomas presented the paper which outlined project work already commenced, baseline information and financial procedures. Members will receive regular updates on individual projects at future Board meetings.</p> <p><u>GAF3 Consultation</u> - A draft response to the GAF3 consultation document will be drawn up and circulated to Board Members for comments prior to its submission by the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008 deadline.</p> <p><u>Programme of Development (POD)</u> – On availability of updated guidance from CLG it is proposed that work be undertaken to refresh the Aylesbury Vale POD. This will be circulated to Board Members in early August for comments prior to the potential submission deadline of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2008.</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:-</b></p> <p><b>The Board:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Noted the report</b></li> <li>2) <b>Agreed the proposals in terms of the arrangements to respond to the consultation on the new system of funding.</b></li> <li>3) <b>Agreed the proposals in terms of the arrangements to refresh and submit the Aylesbury Vale Programme of Development.</b></li> </ol>	
7.	<p><b>CIF2 Programme Update</b> Alan Sherwell referred to public concern regarding the Aston Clinton Road Primary Public Transport Corridor. Development of the Eastern Relief Road would reduce traffic. Alan to discuss with Richard Harrington separately as to how to take this forward.</p>	

	<p><u>Expressions of Interest</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Val Letheren informed that the first three Expressions of Interest were ranked gold by SEERA at the Transport Board.</li> <li>- Monies must be spent within a short timeframe.</li> <li>- It is important to encourage more people to catch buses by providing good quality services as in particular this will help reduce pollution in air quality management areas.</li> </ul> <p>Val Letheren offered to speak with Alan Sherwell on this subject.</p> <p>Neil Gibson reported that a public consultation is built into the delivery strategy.</p> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:-</b>  <b>The Board noted the report</b></p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Managing Director's Report</b>  Richard Harrington presented the report.</p> <p><u>EMB</u> - The Executive Management Board is progressing and work with the programme teams ongoing.</p> <p><u>Aston Clinton Road MDA</u> – the developers are still interested in finding a workable solution with the William Harding Trust and negotiations with the Broughton Trust are continuing. Aylesbury Vale Advantage will assist if called upon.</p> <p><u>Away Day</u> – The Barn at Chilton has been secured as the venue on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The day aims to bring the Board up to speed following the Board changes and look at where AVA is going over the next 6-12 months. English Partnerships have been asked to facilitate the event. Members were asked to put forward their views/ideas for the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adrian Shooter said he thought the vision most important not how it is implemented as this is for the officers to do.</li> <li>- The direction as to where the Board is going is not clear.</li> <li>- New members seek further clarification of the vision.</li> <li>- It was thought that six items were too much to cover in one day.</li> <li>- It was decided that the three key items should be 1) Aylesbury Vale Vision 2) Programme Team Delivery and 3) Partner Engagement, with Economic Development being part of the vision section.</li> </ul> <p><u>MKSM</u> – Richard Harrington, the Chairman, AVDC and BCC met with Milton Keynes Partnership and Milton Keynes Council in April. Discussion topics included Newton Longville, Economic Development, East West Rail and the MKSM Conference.</p> <p><u>MD Recruitment</u> – the Chairman informed Members that the Executive Management Board would be meeting with candidates on 9<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oona Muirhead informed that SEEDA would be leading on transport within MKSM.</li> <li>• Alex Pratt highlighted the need for additional funding from external partners. It is also important that we improve our reputation so we can present ourselves better in the market and be seen as a leader.</li> <li>• Graham Aylett of the Thomas Hickman's Charity, attending as a member of the public, said he would be happy to be associated with the Town Centre Programme Team. Thomas Hickman are the largest freeholders in the town centre.</li> </ul> <p><b>It was RESOLVED:- The Board noted the report</b></p>	
13.	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>AOB to be an agenda item in both the open and closed sessions at future meetings.</p>	
	The meeting concluded at approximately 5.45pm	
	<b>Next Meeting: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> September, 10.00am at Friars Court</b>	JH