

# Dorset County Council

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,  
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 13 February 2013.

## **Present:**

John Wilson (Chairman)  
Andrew Cattaway (Vice-Chairman)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Dan Brember, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Margaret Phipps, Peter Richardson, Ian Smith, Mark Tewkesbury, William Trite, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

## Officers attending:

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Mike Harries (Interim Director for Environment), David Phillips (Director of Public Health), Paul Kent (Director for Corporate Resources), Jonathan Mair (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Helen Whitby (Principal Democratic Services Officer), Paul Goodchild (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

## For minutes 12 to 13:

William Alexander (Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel) and Graham Russell (Member of the Independent Remuneration Panel).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the County Council to be held on **24 April 2014**.)

## **Apologies for Absence**

1. Apologies for absence were received from Andy Canning, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Susan Jefferies and Mervyn Jeffery.

## **Code of Conduct**

2. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

## **Minutes**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2013 were confirmed and signed, subject to an amendment to minute 94.3 to state that the Navitus Bay Wind Park planning application would be submitted by Eneco Wind UK Ltd and EDF Energy Renewables, and not the Government.

## **Matters Arising**

### Minute No. 101.1 – Questions

4.1 Regarding his question at the previous County Council meeting on traffic signage on the A35 Dorchester Bypass and concerns over the response from the Highways Agency, one of the County Council Members for Dorchester (Trevor Jones) reported that he had received a reply from an officer of the Highways Agency. The Leader had also received

a letter in response from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State responsible for the Highways Agency. Both responses were considered to be unhelpful, and the Leader commented that the Highways Agency should cooperate more with elected members with good local knowledge.

Minute No. 98.7 – A Proposal for Joint Health and Wellbeing Olympic Legacy for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole, and Locality Updates

4.2 Regarding references to Olympic Legacy, the County Council Member for Weymouth Town asked for clarification on the procedure for allocation of Olympic Legacy funds. The Chief Executive clarified that the amount of funds was in excess of £0.5m and therefore EU procurement rules would apply. Community bids for funding were near to completion and the relevant officer would be asked to contact the member with more information.

**Public Participation**

Public Speaking

5.1 A question from Mrs Lisa Goodwin, Clerk of Holt Parish Council, in relation to flooding in the Parish of Holt was put to the Cabinet Member for Environment. The question and written answer provided is set out in Annexure 1 to these minutes.

5.2 Questions from Ms Emily Sibley, a resident of Dorchester, in relation to Domiciliary Care provision, Commissioning and the Budget were put to the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care and Corporate Resources. The questions and written answers provided are set out in Annexure 1 to these minutes.

5.3 A question from Mr Barry Thompson, Chairman of the Dorchester & District Labour Party, in relation to the Living Wage was put to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources. The question and written answer provided is set out in Annexure 1 to these minutes.

5.4 A question from Mr Lee Rhodes, Vice-Chairman of the Dorset County Branch of UNISON, in relation to the Budget was put to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources. The question and written answer provided is set out in Annexure 1 to these minutes.

5.5 Questions from Mr Steven Sibley, resident of Dorchester, in relation to the Forward Together Programme, property disposal and Children's Services 'Hub' buildings were put to the Cabinet Members for Environment, Corporate Resources and Children's Safeguarding and Families. The questions and written answers provided are set out in Annexure 1 to these minutes.

Petitions

6. There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

**Chairman's Announcements**

7. The Chairman reported the following events since the last meeting:-

(i) Mayor of Bournemouth's Civic Service

The Chairman had represented the County Council at a civic service in Bournemouth in November 2013 to commemorate Dorset people who had been awarded the Victoria Cross. The soldiers had been represented by civic dignitaries from their birth towns, including four County Mayors and two District Council Chairmen.

(ii) Launch of Schools Apprenticeship Scheme  
The Chairman had attended the launch of Ferndown Upper School's participation in the County Council's apprenticeship scheme in December 2013 in his capacity as Chairman and County Council Member for Ferndown. He had been joined at the event by the other County Council Member for Ferndown, Ian Smith.

(iii) Royal Visit  
The Princess Royal had visited the Jailhouse Café in the grounds of the Verne Prison on Portland in December 2013. The Café provided catering skills training for prisoners and young people from the Young Offenders Institute in order to improve their life chances upon release. The Princess Royal is Patron of the Butler Trust for the welfare of offenders.

(iv) Lord-Lieutenant Retirement Event  
In January 2014 Mrs Valerie Pitt-Rivers had retired as the Lord-Lieutenant for Dorset after almost eight years. A small event had been held at County Hall to thank her for her support for the County Council during her term of office and to wish her and her husband a long and happy retirement.

It had been confirmed that Angus Campbell, the previous Leader of the County Council, had been appointed by the Queen as the next Lord-Lieutenant for Dorset. The Chairman had written to Mr Campbell on behalf of members of the Council and the people of Dorset to offer sincere congratulations at his appointment to such an important office.

(v) Mental Health Pledge  
'Time to Change' was an initiative designed to recognise the problems of mental health and to eliminate the stigma and discrimination many sufferers had to face, often in the workplace. The Member Champion for Mental Health, Michael Bevan, had encouraged the organisers to bring a 'Time to Change' function to County Hall in January 2014 so that representatives of the County Council could sign a pledge to declare an ambition to end mental health discrimination in Dorset. The pledge had been signed by the Chairman, the Member Champion for Mental Health, the Cabinet Member for Community and Public Health and the Chief Executive.

(vi) Dorset DAAT Recovery Day  
On 1 February 2014 the Dorset Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team (DAAT) held an event that involved recovering addicts and their families walking a path around central Dorchester. It aimed to demonstrate that, just like there was a path around the middle of Dorchester, there was a path to recovery from addiction and substance abuse. The Chairman had joined the walk before formally opening the event at the Corn Exchange, where DAAT had very informative displays and recovered addicts told of their achievements.

(vii) New Directors  
The Chairman welcomed two new Directors to the County Council meeting. Mike Harries, Interim Director for Environment, was well known to members as he had previously been Deputy Director for Environment. Sara Tough, Director for Children's Services, had been with the authority for six weeks after moving to Dorset from Swindon Borough Council. The Chairman wished both Directors every success in their critically important roles.

(vii) Other Events Attended

The Chairman informed members that he and the Vice-Chairman had also attended the High Sheriff's Service for the legal profession, a Poole Harbour Commissioners function, several Christmas receptions and charity events, student award presentations at QE School and a Richard Eley Trust concern for young musicians. They had visited two Royal Mail sorting offices to see how they dealt with Christmas, toured the offices at County Hall to offer seasonal good wishes to staff, and attended a special church service to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Joseph Weld Hospice combined with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Community Specialist Palliative Care Nursing Service.

**Leader's Announcements**

8. The Leader of the Council reported on the following issues facing the Council, and invited questions from all members:

(i) Extreme Weather

The Leader paid tribute to ongoing work by County Council staff across Dorset to deal with the effects of the heavy rain and strong winds in recent weeks, and in particular staff in highways and communications. He commented that the County Council had received a great deal of support from all relevant agencies and that the joint working had been successful.

The County Council Member for Swanage asked the Leader if he was aware of any additional funding that would be available to deal with floods and the consequences of flooding, and what measures the County Council was taking to repair sea defences and the road network. The Leader explained that there was a lot of work to be done following the recent extreme weather conditions and that the Prime Minister had announced that money from central government would be no object regarding the relief effort. He assured members that every action would be taken to access these funds.

One of the County Council Members for Dorchester (Trevor Jones) asked if Dorset County Council had a hardship fund, and how this could potentially be accessed by people who had been affected by flooding. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care explained that the hardship fund of £700,000 was administered by the Dorset Adult Access Team and was used to help people who, for example, could not afford to replace broken kitchen appliances. The Cabinet Member would circulate a statement to members to explain in detail how funding was allocated, but it was noted that this was not appropriate to help with flooding.

In response to a question from the County Council Member for Blandford, the Leader confirmed that County Council officers would make every effort to apply for EU funding for infrastructure improvements following the recent severe weather.

The County Council Member for Burton Grange asked if the highways works on Stonyways Bridge in Burton could be postponed so that flood defence measures could be incorporated. The Leader commented that this was a sensible suggestion and that it would be a missed opportunity not to take flood mitigation measures into account.

(ii) Supported Local Bus Services

The Leader reported that on 4 December 2013 the Cabinet had decided to revise local bus service contracts to achieve savings to the value of £970,279, and reinstate other services to give an overall saving of £822,057 on the current spend. The Leader had been interviewed about the decision on BBC Radio 4's Today Programme and had explained that the process had been very thorough and positive, and that alternative routes had been provided in order to mitigate rural isolation.

Suggestions had been made that those passengers who were eligible for concessionary fares and wished to make a contribution towards fares in some areas, so that routes could be retained, should be able to do so. The Leader had spoken to other council Leaders across Dorset, and with Dorset MPs, and had received a lot of positive responses. The idea would be pursued and would be valuable if services could be provided in a different way.

(iii) Apprenticeship Scheme

The Leader had visited QE School for the launch of the school's participation in the County Council's apprenticeship scheme. He commented that he had been impressed with the young people who had gone to work at different companies. The scheme was a good opportunity for young people to gain valuable work experience and earn money whilst doing so, and it was hoped it would be a great success.

The County Council Member for Portland Tophill thanked the Leader for his support of the County Council's apprenticeship scheme. He commented that a recent report had stated that 20% of young people nationally had found it difficult to secure employment. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications highlighted that Dorset was doing well compared to other authorities regionally and nationally regarding unemployment for young people. Recent data from November 2013 had shown that the overall number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Dorset was 3.9% compared to 5.2% nationally, and a benchmark of 5.3% for similar authorities.

(iv) The Living Wage

The Staffing Committee had recently debated the Living Wage, and how it could fit in with the County Council's pay structure, at meetings on 28 November 2013 and 3 February 2014. The Committee had taken the view that the County Council should re-affirm its commitment to the policy of national pay negotiations through the Local Government Association, but that negotiations should include consideration of the national Living Wage campaign. The Chancellor had announced that there would be a national review of the minimum wage in due course.

The County Council Member for Burton Grange asked if the County Council would be at risk if the Living Wage was introduced before the outcome of national pay negotiations was known, and the Leader explained that there would be risks if the County Council made changes to the pay levels locally, not through national negotiations.

The County Council Member for Weymouth Town stated that the definition of poverty was an income of £16,000 per year. There were 1,500 employees of the County Council who were on a lower wage than this. The Living Wage

campaign was introduced out of concern for the County Council as an employer and other local authorities with similar financial constraints had already supported the principle of the campaign. He also asked if the County Council had a children's poverty policy. The Leader commented that the County Council had a job evaluated pay scale, and that the principles of the Living Wage Campaign had been considered by the Staffing Committee. When the national pay negotiations had been concluded the bottom end of the pay scale would be looked at, and the Leader highlighted that in the previous year some levels had been removed from the lower end of the scale. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care commented that the children's poverty policy would be discussed at the Children's Services Overview Committee.

(v) Superfast Broadband in Dorset

The Leader had attended an event in Bridport, with the County Council Member for Bridport, to launch the first tranche of the Superfast Broadband project in Dorset. There was a lot of work to be done on the project, but the Leader congratulated the Superfast Dorset Team for their work so far.

The County Council Member for Highcliffe and Walkford asked if the Leader could comment more on the benefits to business of superfast broadband, which could allow companies to relocate to villages which previously had very limited internet access. The Leader noted that this was an important point of the project, but it was the responsibility of members to encourage more businesses to sign up, which would enable the project to expand.

(vi) Leader's Blog

The Leader announced that he would be starting a blog on Dorset For You from 14 February 2014. The first blog would include the Leader's budget speech.

### **Questions from Members of the Council**

9.1 Members of the Council were invited to submit questions to the Chairman of the Council, Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members, or chairmen of appropriate committees on any business not covered on this agenda, including any questions on the discharge of the functions of the Fire Authority. The following question was raised in accordance with Standing Order 20:-

Property Disposal

9.2 A question from one of the County Council Members for Dorchester (Trevor Jones) in relation to property disposal was put to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources. The question and written answer provided is set out in Annexure 2 to these minutes.

### **Reports of the Cabinet**

10.1 The reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 6 November 2013, 4 December 2013, 18 December 2013, 15 January 2014 and 3 February 2014 were presented and their adoption duly moved and seconded.

10.2 The following matter was raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2013:-

Review of Outside Bodies, Panels and other Consultative Bodies

10.3 In relation to minute 501.2, the County Council Member for Weymouth Town asked that, following his appointment to the Learning Disability Partnership Board, the Cabinet consider the appointment of a new Member Champion for Learning Disabilities. He also suggested that a Member Champion for Economic Growth and Development be appointed. The Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services commented that the position of Member Champion for Learning Disabilities should also be considered by the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee. The Leader added that the addition of a Member Champion for Economic Growth and Development would be considered.

#### Supported Local Bus Services

10.4 In relation to minute 460.3 and in particular the comments he had made at the meeting, the County Council Member for Lytchett stated that he would like it noted that he was particularly concerned about how local people would get to work. The Chairman explained that the comments would be noted, but that the minutes had been confirmed by the Cabinet and could not be altered.

#### Transforming Services – The Baseline Property Portfolio

10.5 In relation to minute 469.3, the County Council Member for Sherborne Rural highlighted further changes which had been made to the leadership and management of Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust. The Trust had appointed a new Chairman who would start in April 2014, and were in the process of appointing a new Chief Executive.

#### On Street Pay and Display for Dorset

10.6 In relation to minute 482, the County Council Member for Swanage, who was also the Chairman of the Policy Development Panel on Pay and Display Parking, confirmed that the Panel had agreed the scope of their work and extended their remit to consider enforcement. He confirmed that the Panel would closely examine the needs of local residents. The Cabinet Member for Environment welcomed the fact that the Panel had started their work, and commented that it would be useful to consider how enforcement of pay and display parking was managed.

10.7 In relation to minute 483.1, the County Council Member for Wareham commented that a form had been sent to all town and parish councillors regarding pay and display parking in their areas. The deadline for submissions was 25 February 2014 and the member asked that this be extended until 25 March to enable more responses to be returned. The Cabinet Member for Environment explained that that timescale had been considered by the Panel, but it was necessary to gather the information quickly. It was her view that those who had been sent forms would make every effort to comply with the deadline, but information received after the deadline would still be considered.

#### Nurseries and Out of School Clubs – Transfer of Undertaking of Public Employees

10.8 In relation to minute 510.2, the County Council Member for Blandford asked why the potential move to a new provider had been delayed until 2015. The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families explained that, following consultation with service users in the area, there was a demand for services to continue to be delivered by the County Council as they currently were. The County Council would continue deliver a slightly amended service, but not at a loss. Staff consultation had commenced, and the service would be reviewed later in 2014 to monitor progress.

10.9 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2013:-

#### Corporate Parenting Panel

10.10 In relation to minute 535, the County Council Member for Weymouth Town highlighted that the Children in Care/Care Leavers Board had been merged with the Corporate Parenting Panel. He commented that it was vitally important that the County Council remain focused on their collective responsibility in this area. The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families confirmed that although the Board and the Panel had merged, the work of officers would not decrease and service users would see no change. The agenda of the new Corporate Parenting Panel would be more focused and progress would be reported and acted upon sooner. It would also raise the profile of the work.

#### Quarterly Asset Management Update

10.11 In relation to minute 528.5, one of the County Council Members for Dorchester (Richard Biggs) commented that the policy for the use of sprinklers was unclear. He also asked for confirmation that optimism bias should be used for genuine contingency issues, and not as a 'slush fund' for changes to the brief. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications explained the situation with regard to the installation of sprinklers: church schools which were built by the County Council and then handed back to the Diocese did not have sprinklers installed as the Diocese did not have a policy to include sprinklers. It was the County Council's policy to install sprinklers in all new schools which were operated by the Council, but this did not include Voluntary Aided schools. She also confirmed that optimism bias was only used for unforeseen circumstances, so projects could be closely controlled. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources highlighted that a rigorous process was followed before optimism bias funds were released, and that this was governed by the Asset Management Group.

10.12 In relation to minute 528.5, the County Council Member for Portland Harbour asked for clarification on the use of sprinkler systems in church schools. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications explained that the majority of Dorset schools did not have sprinklers due to their age. All new schools were built with sprinklers, but church schools were built under Diocesan policies, which did not require sprinklers to be fitted. The Cabinet Member for Children's Safeguarding and Families, who was also the Chairman of the Dorset Fire Authority, added that there was no national policy on the use of sprinkler systems in schools and so welcomed all authorities who had adopted the use of sprinklers. The Dorset Fire Authority had promoted the use of sprinklers and had made representations nationally to get clear government guidance on the issue.

#### Supported Local Bus Services

10.12 In relation to minute 522.8, the County Council Member for Lytchett highlighted that the wording of comments he had made at the meeting was ambiguous, and could be understood to mean that MPs would be contacted regarding concessionary bus pass holders. He commented that if a person could afford to pay for travel they should not have a concessionary bus pass. The Chairman explained that the comments would be noted, but that the minutes had been confirmed by the Cabinet and could not be altered.

10.13 In relation to minute 522.1, the County Council Member for Egdon Heath highlighted that, as a result of changes to local bus services, some 16 to 18 year olds had difficulty attending school and college. The Cabinet Member for Education and Communications added that the government would be raising the participation age to 18, which meant that young people would have to stay in some form of training or education until that age. The County Council provided concessionary transport up to the age of 16 as long as distance criteria were met. When the young person reached 16 the County Council had no responsibility to provide transport, and it would become the responsibility of the young person or their parent / carer.



10.14 In relation to minute 522.8, the County Council Member for Wareham highlighted that the evening service from Poole to Swanage had been removed and would be missed. She asked about the availability of additional funds which had been put aside for local community buses. The Cabinet Member for Environment explained that she was aware of the problems between Poole and Swanage, and this was not helped by the fact that it was split between two local authorities. The County Council was in discussions with private bus operators who were considering several routes which had been withdrawn. The changes had been applied in as equitable way as possible, but it was difficult to keep routes which the bus companies had declared uneconomical. There was a community transport fund and to access this communities should come forward with a business case and work with the voluntary sector. There were already several good examples of how this had worked in Dorset.

10.15 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013:-

#### Questions from Members of the Council

10.16 In relation to minute 572, the County Council Member for Weymouth Town asked what progress had been made with the Corporate Plan and the Economic Development Plan. The Leader explained that the Plans would be considered by the Cabinet in three months.

#### Supported Local Bus Services

10.17 In relation to minute 547, the County Council Member for Bridport thanked the Cabinet for their decision to subsidise peak time journeys on the 47 bus service in term time. She explained that a decision had been taken by the operator that the main service was not commercially viable, and she hoped to bring a petition on the issue to the next meeting of the Environment Overview Committee. The Leader explained that all routes would be kept under review.

10.18 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2014:-

#### Panels and Boards

10.19 In relation to minute 8.2, the County Council Member for Weymouth Town asked who was responsible for the review of the Dorset Health and Wellbeing Board and when a better solution would be achieved. The Leader, who was also the Chairman of the Board, explained that a meeting would be held soon to look at how the Board could be more efficient and that there would be a greater focus on deliverable outcomes. He commented that Dorset was not the only authority in the country which had issues with the size of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

10.20 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2014:-

#### Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2014/15 to 2016/17

(Note: It was clarified by the Chief Executive that Members had been granted dispensations in order to take part and vote in relation to the budget and council tax setting items on the agenda following the elections held earlier in 2013.)

10.21 The Chairman highlighted that forthcoming legislation by the Department for Communities and Local Government stated that all local authorities should take a recorded vote following discussion of their budget. Although this was not yet required, the Leader of the Council proposed that a recorded vote be taken and the proposal was seconded by the

Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Group. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried.

10.22 The Leader of the Council presented the budget for 2013/14 to 2015/16 (a copy of the Leader's speech is set out in Annexure 3 to these minutes). He proposed the recommendations put forward by the Cabinet. The proposal was seconded by the Deputy Leader.

10.23 In the absence of the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group then addressed the meeting and highlighted that a private business would not operate without knowing its finance settlement before 18 December 2013. He explained that because of this the budget had been rushed. The County Council did not have any long term spending review guidelines as the latest finance settlement was only until 2015/16, and this did not help medium term financial planning. The Council Tax referendum limit had only been decided on 5 February 2014. He stated that Central Government should take responsibility for the late notification to the County Council of these key financial matters. He highlighted the £850,000 cut in subsidies to local bus services in Dorset, and Phoenix House which had been built 18 months previously at a cost of £4m and would only be worth £2m if it was closed and sold as proposed by the Cabinet. He also highlighted the qualified, professional staff of Dorset County Council who had been subject to redundancies and replacement by over-paid consultants and agency staff. Consultants and agency staff had cost the Dorset tax payer £1.3m between July and September 2013, which was an extraordinary amount even after taking into account sickness and maternity cover. He commented that Dorset's roads were in a lamentable condition and needed urgent attention. Many had become even worse following the recent floods and severe weather, and he asked that the County Council apply urgently for EU funding to assist with the damage. He confirmed that the Liberal Democrat Group would support the proposed council tax rise of 1.99% to ensure that County Council services continue at an acceptable level, but this did not mean that the Group supported the detail of the budget. He asked that separate recorded votes be taken on the separate parts of the budget recommendation so that the position of the Liberal Democrat Group could be made clear.

10.24 The Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Group then addressed the meeting and highlighted that the coalition government had taken £100,000 out of services which were provided by the County Council. A lot of concerns had been raised regarding transport and local bus services, which enabled people to be independent and support the economy and their families. He highlighted the need for leadership and vision and commented that collectively the County Council was moving forward. Weymouth and Portland had over 60,000 residents and the Labour and Co-operative Group represented most of those people. He asked how the budget process recognised the areas of social deprivation, of which there were four in Weymouth and Portland. There had been a failing in the past over the transparency of how the budget setting reflected local communities. The Labour and Co-operative Group anticipated more engagement and more social enterprises, and welcomed the £5,000 to be allocated to each County Councillor for small projects in their respective areas. Regarding the Living Wage, he commented that the County Council also employed staff on zero hour contracts, and the County Council should demonstrate the value in people who provided the Council's services. A failure to do this would show a lack of credibility. The Labour and Co-operative Group wanted to provide a constructive challenge, and they did not want the budget to be a smokescreen to take services away. It was the view of the Group Leader that the budget was not ambitious enough.

10.25 Members took the opportunity to ask questions regarding the budget setting process and particular items within the budget, to which Cabinet Members responded to each of the individual points raised. Many members welcomed the Leader's announcement

that each County Councillor would be allocated £5,000 to spend on small projects in their respective divisions. A number of members also welcomed the Cabinet's decision to increase the precept for 2014/15 and commented that this should have been done in previous years instead of taking up the Government's council tax freeze grant.

10.26 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 25 (i) were recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Spencer Flower	Peter Richardson
Michael Bevan	Ian Gardner	William Trite
Steve Butler	Robert Gould	Daryl Turner
Andrew Cattaway	Peter Hall	David Walsh
Ronald Coatsworth	Jill Haynes	Peter Wharf
Robin Cook	Colin Jamieson	John Wilson
Toni Coombs	David Jones	
Hilary Cox	Rebecca Knox	
Deborah Croney	Mike Lovell	
Peter Finney	Margaret Phipps	

**Total: 26**

Against

Richard Biggs	Beryl Ezzard	Mark Tewkesbury
Dan Brember	Trevor Jones	Kate Wheller
Mike Byatt	Ros Kayes	
Barrie Cooper	Paul Kimber	
Fred Drane	David Mannings	

**Total: 12**

(The following members abstained from voting on the recommendation: David Harris and Ian Smith.)

10.27 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 25 (ii) and (iii) were recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Beryl Ezzard	Rebecca Knox
Michael Bevan	Peter Finney	Mike Lovell
Richard Biggs	Spencer Flower	David Mannings
Steve Butler	Ian Gardner	Margaret Phipps
Andrew Cattaway	Robert Gould	Peter Richardson
Ronald Coatsworth	Peter Hall	William Trite
Robin Cook	David Harris	Daryl Turner
Toni Coombs	Jill Haynes	David Walsh
Barrie Cooper	Colin Jamieson	Peter Wharf
Hilary Cox	David Jones	John Wilson
Deborah Croney	Trevor Jones	
Fred Drane	Ros Kayes	

**Total: 34**Against

Dan Brember  
 Mike Byatt  
 Paul Kimber  
 Mark Tewkesbury  
 Kate Wheller

**Total: 5**

(The following member abstained from voting on the recommendations: Ian Smith.)

10.28 Following debate and on being put to the vote recommendation 25 was carried.

Asset Management Capital Priorities

10.29 In relation to recommendation 28, one of the County Council Members for Dorchester (Richard Biggs) commented that he was concerned on items which had been included as capital priorities as new bids which were mostly related to ICT projects. He asked if these were priorities which people in local communities would want. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources explained that the bids had been carefully scrutinised and the Cabinet had made significant changes to focus on priorities which supported the Forward Together Programme. He added that many projects would be procured jointly with other local authorities across Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. There would be a report back to the Cabinet on this issue in due course.

10.30 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 28 were recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Spencer Flower	Peter Richardson
Michael Bevan	Ian Gardner	William Trite
Steve Butler	Robert Gould	Daryl Turner
Andrew Cattaway	Peter Hall	David Walsh
Ronald Coatsworth	Jill Haynes	Peter Wharf
Robin Cook	Colin Jamieson	John Wilson
Toni Coombs	David Jones	
Hilary Cox	Rebecca Knox	
Deborah Croney	Mike Lovell	
Peter Finney	Margaret Phipps	

**Total: 26**Against

Richard Biggs	Trevor Jones	Kate Wheller
Dan Brember	Ros Kayes	
Mike Byatt	Paul Kimber	
Barrie Cooper	David Mannings	
Beryl Ezzard	Mark Tewkesbury	

**Total: 11**

(The following members abstained from voting on the recommendation: Fred Drane, David Harris and Ian Smith.)

10.31 Following debate and on being put to the vote recommendation 28 was carried.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2014-15

10.32 Following debate and on being put to the vote recommendation 31 was carried.

Adoption of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Core Strategy

10.33 In relation to recommendation 38, the County Council Member for Burton Grange stated that he would abstain from voting on the recommendation as he could not support a strategy which would lead to additional heavy goods vehicles on Christchurch roads. The Leader confirmed that members were being asked to approve the Core Strategy and at this stage no specific sites were under consideration. The consultation on the Core Strategy would conclude at 4.00pm on 13 February 2014. The County Council Member for St Leonards and St Ives also confirmed that he would abstain from voting on the recommendation.

10.34 In relation to recommendation 38, the County Council Member for Portland Tophill explained that quarrying was an important issue on Portland, and the fact that the County Council had set up a Mineral Liaison Group was to be commended. A lot of quarries on Portland were near to housing estates which presented difficulties. He stated, however, that he supported the Core Strategy.

10.35 In relation to recommendation 38, the County Council Member for Egdon Heath highlighted that he would object to some sites which had been put forward by landowners, but supported the process and the Core Strategy. He asked the Leader to ensure that all members had full involvement when the site specific document was considered by the Cabinet as complete transparency was required. The County Council Member for Wareham also supported this view. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that the Core Strategy was not site specific, but only ratified the criteria by which sites would be considered. The sites would be considered with Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole, although most sites would be in Dorset. She assured members that the process would be open and transparent.

10.36 Following debate and on being put to the vote recommendation 38 was carried.

**Resolved**

11. That the reports of the Cabinet and the following recommendations as set out below be adopted:-

Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2014/15 to 2016/17

25. That the County Council be recommended to approve:

- (i) the revenue budget strategy for 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- (ii) the budget requirement and precept for 2014/15; and
- (iii) the position on general balances and reserves.

Reason for Recommendations

26. To enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget plan for 2014/15 to 2016/17 and beyond.

Asset Management Capital Priorities

28. That the County Council be recommended to:

- (i) Agree the revised (planning) control totals for the capital programme 2013/14 to 2016/17 as referred to in Appendix 1 of the Cabinet Member's report, subject to overall consideration of the MTFS;
- (ii) Approve the inclusion of the projects, detailed in Appendix 2 of the report, in the capital programme 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- (iii) Agree to ring fence the initial (£1.526M) capital receipts from the East Dorset Civic Centre scheme to balance the over commitment;
- (iv) Reaffirm agreement to achieving a policy where the underlying need to borrow does not increase by 2016/17 unless funded from other sources;
- (v) Authorise the Chief Financial Officer to make adjustments to the phasing of payments between years if necessary when the capital programme is finalised.

Reason for Recommendations

29. The available resources after taking account of committed projects were insufficient to meet all the new bids. It was therefore necessary to ring fence capital receipts from the East Dorset Civic Centre project to enable the proposal to be funded.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2014-15

31.1 That the County Council be recommended to approve:

- The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2014/15 to 2016/17;
- The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement;
- The Treasury Management Strategy; and
- The Investment Strategy.

31.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Financial Officer to determine the most appropriate means of funding the Capital Programme.

Reasons for Recommendations

32.1 The Prudential Code provided a framework under which the Council's capital finance decisions were carried out. It required the Council to demonstrate that its capital expenditure plans were affordable, external borrowing was within prudent and sustainable levels and treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with professional good practice. Adherence to the Prudential Code was mandatory as set out in the Local Government Act 2003.

32.2 The report recommended the indicators to be applied by the Council for the financial years 2014/15 to 2016/17. The successful implementation of the Code would assist in the Council's objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.

Adoption of Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Core Strategy

38.1 That the County Council be recommended to adopt the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Minerals Strategy, subject to its inclusion of the main modifications set out in the Inspector's Report;

38.2 That, subject to 38.1 above, to confirm that the date of adoption will be either 18 March 2014 or two weeks after the date of the last of the three Council meetings for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole councils, whichever is the later;

38.3 That officers be authorised to make those additional (non-material) modifications to the Plan which were the subject of consultation, together with any other additional modifications which benefit the clarity of the Plan;

38.4 That the County Council notes that the Plan will require a resolution to adopt it by all three Councils before it is formally adopted.

Reason for Recommendations

39. To secure an up-to-date Minerals Strategy in accordance with the local Development Scheme, which would contribute to Corporate Aim 4: Safeguard and enhance Dorset's unique environment and support our local economy.

**Members' Allowances Scheme 2014/15**

12.1 The Council considered a report by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) which set out the recommendations arising from a recent review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

12.2 The Chairman of the IRP introduced the report and outlined each area of consideration during the review. He explained that the previous Panel had set out proposals for four years, but it was the intention of the current Panel to make recommendations on an annual basis. He highlighted that all members of the Council had been invited to make representations to the Panel; a number of interviews had taken place and the recommendations had been made as a direct result of the representations which had been made. The existing scheme had been simplified and amended in light of the County Council's commitment to become a more member-led organisation. In all cases the Panel had considered the role and not the person who undertook the role.

12.3 The Chairman of the IRP highlighted that the Panel had recommended that the Basic Allowance be increased. The increase was in line with the 1% salary increase awarded to officers in 2013/14. There was also a higher expectation of members following the recent Local Government Association Peer Review. In addition to these factors, the IRP had taken into account the County Council's current ICT pilot scheme regarding the provision of tablet computers to members. An assumption had been made that the pilot scheme would be successful and that members would be required to purchase their own tablet, but this would be reviewed if the roll out did not progress.

12.4 The bands of special responsibility allowance had been simplified, and the Chairman of the IRP outlined the changes which were presented in detail in the report. Members noted that the IRP had not considered the mileage allowance, as this was set by HMRC. The Panel had also not taken taxation of allowances into account as it was not part of the Panel's remit; council tax advisors would report back to Group Leaders on this issue. The review had taken into account recent policy changes and the national financial situation and the proposed changes, if approved, would deliver budget savings of £11,000 over the current year.

12.5 The Chairman of the IRP thanked Jonathan Mair (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Democratic Services) and Rebecca Guest (Senior Democratic Services Officer) for their assistance with the review. He confirmed that the Panel would be happy to receive any further representations from members which would support the next review.

12.7 The County Council Member for Egdon Heath asked if the IRP would review Cabinet Member's special responsibility allowances with a view to reducing them and increasing the basic allowance for all members as, following the Peer Review, all members of the County Council were expected to have greater responsibility. The Chairman of the IRP commented that this could be reviewed by the Panel in due course.

12.6 The Leader thanked the IRP for their work on the Members' Allowances Scheme and proposed the changes as set out in the Panel's report. The Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Group seconded the proposals.

**Resolved**

13. That the proposed changes to the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2014/15, as set out in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, be adopted.

**Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

14.1 The reports of the following meetings held on the dates stated were presented:-

Overview Committees

Children's Services	4 November 2013
Children's Services	21 January 2014
Adult and Community Services	2 December 2013
Adult and Community Services	22 January 2014
Environment	23 January 2014

Scrutiny Committees

Audit and Scrutiny	26 November 2013
Audit and Scrutiny	20 January 2014
Dorset Health Scrutiny	19 November 2013

14.2 The following matter was raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee held on 2 December 2014:-

Pathways to Independence

14.3 On minute 141.8, the County Council Member for Sherborne Rural asked what was meant by "promote health and well-being". On minute 141.9 he asked how the County Council was working with people in local communities to stop people feeling lonely and isolated, and confirmation that this was not an extension of 'care in the community'. He commented that minute 141.12 was open to misinterpretation. Regarding minute 141.13, it was his view that the title 'Pathways to Independence' was not appropriate, and that elected members would find the programme difficult as well as communities and members of staff. The Chairman of the Children's Services Overview Committee explained that the County Council had a serious problem regarding increasing demand in Adult and Community Services, and a lot of work had been done on the 'Pathways to Independence' programme. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care commented that the topic had been discussed at length at the Children's Services Overview Committee, and it would be difficult to address all of the issues raised at the meeting. She suggested that the County Council Member for Sherborne Rural arrange a meeting with herself and the Director for Adult and Community Services to address his concerns.

14.4 The County Council Member for Wareham commented that the minutes did not always identify each member by ward. The Chairman stated that the County Council had made a decision on the format of the minutes in previous years and there was no intention to change this at present.

**Resolved**

15. That the reports be received.

**Recommendations of Quasi/Legal Committees, Joint Committees and Other Committees**



16.1 The recommendations of the following Committees were presented and their adoption duly moved and seconded.

Standards and Governance: 27 January 2014

Recommendation 8 -	Terms of Reference – Governance
Recommendation 16 -	Independent Members
Recommendation 18 -	Constitutional Changes

Staffing Committee: 3 February 2014

Recommendation 22 -	Pay Policy Statement 2014/15
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Pay Policy Statement 2014/15

16.2 In relation to recommendation 22, the County Council Member for Bridport stated that she could not support it as it had no reference to the Living Wage. She proposed an amendment to paragraph 6.2 of the Dorset County Council Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 to include the following wording: "That Dorset County Council unilaterally pay the Living Wage to employees at this Grade until such a time as it is implemented nationally". The County Council Member for Wareham seconded the amendment. On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

**Resolved**

17. That the following recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee (Recommendations 8, 16 and 18) and the Staffing Committee (Recommendation 22) set out below be adopted:-

Terms of Reference – Governance

8. *That the County Council be asked to amend the Standards and Governance Committee's terms of reference to include "To receive, on an annual basis, the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Local Code of Corporate Governance Compliance Assessment to evaluate the Council's governance arrangements."*

Reason for Recommendation

9. *To ensure that the Committee's terms of reference adequately covered and reflected the full spectrum of its remit and received evidence upon which to evaluate arrangements.*

Independent Members

16. *That the County Council be asked to extend the membership of Elizabeth Bird as an independent member of the Standards and Governance Committee until April 2015.*

Constitutional Change

18. *That the County Council be recommended to approve the revised Petitions Scheme (attached as an annexure to these minutes).*

Reason for Recommendation

19. *To contribute to the corporate aim to "provide innovative and value for money services".*

Pay Policy Statement 2014/15 (Paragraphs 1 and 4)

22. *That the County Council approve the Pay Policy Statement for the 2014/15 financial year (attached as an Annexure to these minutes).*

Reasons for Recommendation

23. *The Staffing Committee oversee matters relating to staff terms and conditions.*

**Dorset Fire Authority**

18. The report of the meeting of the Dorset Fire Authority held on 5 December 2013 was received.

**Resolved**

19. That the report of the Dorset Fire Authority be received.

**Appointments to Committees 2013/14**

20. There were no changes considered in relation to the chairmanship or membership of committees.

**Noted**

Meeting Duration: 10.00am to 2.00pm

Dorset County Council – 13 February 2014

**Annexure 1**

Public Questions

Question from Mrs Lisa Goodwin, Clerk of Holt Parish Council to the Cabinet Member for Environment in relation to Flooding in Parish of Holt.

*(Mrs Goodwin was unable to attend the meeting.)*

Question

Following the recent heavy rainfall, Holt Parish has suffered with a number of roads closed due to flooding. Holt Parish Council would like to inquire why Dorset County Council does not enforce it's power to insist landowners clear ditches adjacent to the highway. The consequent costs of providing signage and repairing the severely damaged roads due to flooding is significant and potentially avoidable.

Answer

As with many things, the enforcement of land drainage (in particular road side ditches) is often complex and confusing. Maintenance is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner, but ensuring proper maintenance is never as simple as it would be hoped.

The Highways Act, our bible when it comes to highways enforcement, is of little use. There are further powers under the Land Drainage Act which we may be able to use, offers more potential, but often the only definite way of enforcing obligations involves common law liability to keep water courses clear and a prosecution for nuisance in a court. This is a rather heavy handed and resource hungry way of proceeding.

As a consequence, we seek to persuade, although we do pursue landowners to get ditches cleared regularly, but unfortunately they are not always particularly keen to co-operate. We send a lot of letters out asking them to clean the ditches, but proceeding past that point is often too resource intensive and of limited value.

We are always looking at more cost effective ways of educating the public as to what they are responsible for and assistance from Parish Councils and local members working with local landowners is invaluable and usually much more successful and quicker than enforcement or litigation.

Questions from Ms Emily Sibley, Resident of Dorchester, to the Cabinet Members for Adult Social Care and Corporate Resources in relation to Domiciliary Care provision, Commissioning, and the Budget.

*(Ms Sibley was unable to attend the meeting.)*

### Questions

1. What measures are Dorset County Council taking to ensure that Domiciliary Framework Providers are not breaking the law regarding the national minimum wage, travel time and travel allowances?
2. Is Dorset County Council ensuring that all 'commissioned' work is provided by staff that are fully vetted?
3. In Dorset County Council's criteria for commissioning home care what weighting is given to cost as opposed to other factors such as quality of care provided?
4. What specific attempts have been made by this council at a national level to defend the Dorset County Council budget and prevent cuts to services?

### Answers

1. Part of our annual monitoring of Providers includes the collation of pay rates for all staff; we monitor these against time recording and ensure that sufficient time is allowed.

In partnership with local Unison colleagues and the independent sector, we have developed a Dorset Care Charter in response to the national drive from Unison which seeks to ensure appropriate terms and conditions of employment for staff employed within the home care sector. This specifically addresses the requirement to achieve national minimum wage and recognises travel time and expenses for the workforce. We are due to consult with all providers on the adoption of the Care Charter and will seek to make adherence to the Charter a requirement of contract.

As part of our regular liaison meetings with providers, we ensure they are kept up to date on recent judgements in relation to payment of the minimum wage. If travel time is not paid, their standard hourly rate needs to be sufficient that when averaged out across the time spent delivering care and the time spent travelling, their rates equate to equal or more than the minimum wage.

2. It is a requirement of the contract that all staff are fully vetted; this is monitored by our Contracts Monitoring Team.
3. The County Council commissions individual packages of care from Providers who are on a framework contract. The tendering process ran with pre-determined prices and therefore award focused on quality and service offer. All Providers were subject to stringent quality checks and were required to have received, as a minimum, CQC 'good' monitoring history over the previous 6 months. Quality weighting carried 70% of scored marks within the tender process.

Having secured a range of providers on a framework call-off contract, individual packages of care are awarded on the basis of availability of service together with confirmation that the needs of the individual can be appropriately met.

Due to workforce capacity issues we do commission care from outside the framework. In such circumstances, providers are required to evidence good or above CQC rating and clearance from our Contracts Monitoring team prior to any arrangement being agreed.

4. Dorset County Council is represented at national level by the Local Government Association, who have lobbied hard for a fair deal for local government in very difficult times. Dorset is also a member of the County Council's Network, which represents the specific interests of counties at national level. Both of these groups are engaged in negotiations at national level in order to influence the sums set aside for local government in successive Spending Reviews and the annual Local Government Finance Settlement.

Dorset County Council has also responded specifically to consultation by the Government on such matters. Recent examples of where this has resulted in a successful outcome include;

- lobbying for the inclusion of previous years' freeze grants into our funding baseline;
- dropping of proposals by the Government to top-slice our funding in respect of New Homes Bonus and transfer this to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The County Council accepts that local government must play its part in helping to reduce the national deficit. Over the last three years, we have made savings of £60 million (or around 20%) in our budget with minimal impact on service levels, whilst at the same time freezing council tax. As the financial squeeze continues, we recognise that it will be harder to make savings in the future, so we are looking at how we can work with the Dorset community to radically change the way we deliver services, within the funding available.

Question from Mr Barry Thompson, Chairman of the Dorchester & District Labour Party to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources in relation to the Living Wage.

Question

At the previous Full Council meeting a motion on the Living Wage was mentioned and sent to staffing committee. What has happened to this motion and when will it be debated by the County Council?

Answer

The motion in relation to the Living Wage was referred from County Council on 13 November 2013 to the Staffing Committee, as it falls within its Terms of Reference. The Committee considered the Living Wage at meetings held on 28 November 2013 and 3 February 2014.

The Committee on 3 February 2014 noted the estimated cost of implementing the Living Wage and the national employers' position. It also re-affirmed, on behalf of the County Council, commitment to the national pay negotiations, which should include considerations to the national Living Wage Campaign.

The Leader will be referring to this matter in his announcements later on the agenda.

Question from Mr Lee Rhodes, Vice-Chairman Chairman of the Dorset County Branch of UNISON to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources in relation to the Budget.

Question

Under the budget proposals at the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2014 council meeting, how many 'anticipated' job losses in Full Time Equivalents will occur to achieve the budget cuts proposed?

Answer

The proposals set out in appendix 4 to the Cabinet report on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2014-15 to 2016-17 will involve a reduction in full-time equivalent staff, although the precise numbers cannot be ascertained at this stage.

This is because some of the proposals need to be worked up in greater detail and some include re-structuring of services, including, for example, the potential formation of a local authority trading company. Staff can be assured that any such proposals will be the subject of full consultation.

Since June 2010, the council has reduced the establishment by 716 full-time equivalent posts, seeking to use natural wastage and redeployment wherever possible. During this period there have been 277 redundancies, of which 184 have been voluntary and only 93 compulsory.

Questions from Mr Steven Sibley, Resident of Dorchester, to the Cabinet Members for Environment, Corporate Resources, and Children's Safeguarding and Families in relation to the Forward Together Programme, Property Disposal and Children's Services 'Hub' Buildings.

*(Mr Sibley was unable to attend the meeting.)*

### Questions

1. On the 15th January 2014 Cabinet Paper agenda item 7 there is a cuts target of £2M from a "Holistic Transport Review" (Table 1). Could Councillors state specifically how this cut will be achieved and what will be the impact on service users and staff?
2. On the 15th January 2014 Cabinet Paper agenda item 7 there is a cuts target of £14.6M from a "Whole authority operating strategy" (Table 1). Could Councillors state specifically how this cut will be achieved and what will be the impact on service users and staff?
3. From the council plans to dispose of property, what are the impacts on the value of property of such a sell-off and how do Councillors intend to insure best value for the public purse from the sales?
4. Within Children's services there appears to be a move towards using "Hub" buildings rather than existing buildings to deliver services. What 'needs assessment' have informed the decision making to choose this method of delivery and where these hubs should be located?

### Answers

1. The Holistic Transport Review is currently being developed. It will include Home to School, (main, SEN and children out of school), adult services, and the public and community transport services for which the County Council is responsible.  
  
The total current spend for all these services exceeds £22M annually. There is a considerable amount of detailed work to be done before we can identify specific changes that may be needed or their impact.  
  
As the review progresses, there will be opportunities for service users, staff and communities to be involved by helping us to understand these services better. In developing new approaches, these will be based upon those outcomes that are valued most and best fulfil what is needed.
2. Section 4 of the 15 January 2014 Cabinet Paper agenda item 7 sets out the approach to finding the £14.6M savings. This will involve a process of systematic challenge to reduce costs and eliminate waste and consider opportunities for income generation. Benchmarking data will be used to identify those areas where there is the greatest potential for cost reduction, together with extensive consultation and engagement with the community and our partners on how changes to the operating model for service delivery can provide the most value. Full details of this approach will be set out in the Forward Together programme for change.
3. The property disposal programme needs to be seen in the context of our plan to retain a reduced property estate of only those assets needed to deliver efficient services in the future i.e. The Baseline Property Portfolio.



The County Council's approach to the reduction in its property portfolio is to maximise the value of each asset, where disposal is on the open market, to ensure best value is obtained. This is achieved in various ways, including through the County Council's development partnership (Dorset Development Partnership LLP), where surplus properties are prepared for development before being marketed.

The surplus assets are distributed across the County and the timing of disposals should avoid any excess supply reducing returns to the public purse.

In some circumstances, where property assets are transferred to community use, covenants are included to ensure that they cannot subsequently be disposed of at a premium without the enhanced value being returned to the County Council.

4. Children's services have recently commenced a review of the operational delivery of the area children social care teams and Early Intervention services. This will include exploring the move towards a more integrated multi professional approach to delivering services to Children, young people and their families. One of the many options that will be explored is the concept of delivering from a number of main sites (the word Hub has not been utilised in the current discussions), but which will reflect both local needs and addresses the challenges of working across both rural and urban environments.

There is considerable evidence across the country that the more opportunity professionals have to understand each others roles and responsibilities the more able they are to share information and reduce the need for duplication. The intention which underpins the development of a new approach is to facilitate a more effective way of working in the interests of children and families by creating opportunities to integrate the workforce either through co-location and or touchdown /mobile working environments. The right locations would be determined based on need in addition to appropriate accommodation available to ensure we also take account of cost.

**Annexure 2**Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Trevor Jones to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources in relation to Property Disposal.

Question

The Cabinet, as I understand it, now have an ambition to dispose of perhaps as much as 75% of the properties we currently occupy.

I don't recall ever seeing or hearing about a "salvage strategy"

- Is there one and if so, could it please be presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee.
- If there isn't, should there be, and could a start be made by a report being prepared for Cabinet via Audit and Scrutiny.

Answer

The County Council does not have a specific salvage strategy in respect of furniture and equipment in surplus properties, but this is an issue which is considered on a case by case basis by services.

The common practice is to re-use furniture which is in good condition, to replace worn out furniture in other premises.

Any remaining furniture will be disposed of in a variety of ways, depending upon its condition. If space exists in another property, the furniture may be held in storage. In some instances, furniture has been offered to local charities, or businesses, via the Reuse and Recycle website.

*In one instance, a charity took the remaining contents of an old school building and shipped it in a container to a school in Africa.*

Any furniture which has little or no residual value and which cannot be disposed of in any of the ways above is either offered to house clearance firms, or as a last resort thrown away.

In view of this flexible approach, I do not feel we need a formal salvage strategy or process.

### **Annexure 3**

#### Budget Speech 2014 – Spencer Flower, Leader of the Council

Chairman, this is the first budget of the new Council, and my first as Leader. I can't promise that it will be any easier than the last four budgets, but what I can promise is that this speech will be shorter than my predecessors'!

I would like to comment on Full Council Agenda item 8 Reports of the Cabinet and in particular Recommendations 25 and 28 as they contain the necessary resolutions on the Medium Term Financial Plan, including the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2014-15, and the Capital Strategy for 2014/15 through to 2016-17.

However, before I do so I would like to thank Paul Kent, Richard Bates, Jim McManus, Peter Illsley, Debbie Ward, Service Directors and all of the Heads of Service for the considerable amount of effort put into the annual budget process. Every year is a challenge but it is becoming more challenging as the Government's austerity programme bites even harder with further cuts in settlements year on year.

I would like to start with some good news about the UK Economy, which is at last starting to show some signs of improvement after a long hard slog since the financial crisis of 2008-09. The forecast by the Office for Budget Responsibility is for growth in the UK economy in 2013 of 1.4% – up from 0.6% in the Chancellor's March Budget. In 2014, growth is forecast to be 2.4%, compared with 1.8% previously. However, the Office of Budget Responsibility had judged this improvement as 'cyclical' rather than as a result of stronger underlying growth, with increased consumer spending being driven by lower savings rather than increased productivity. As a result, forecasts for 2015 onwards are somewhat weaker. Nevertheless it is still an improvement.

In addition, inflation and unemployment are both falling and Sterling has been strengthening; and it looks like interest rates will remain stable – at least for the rest of 2014. So, things are looking a little brighter, although there is still a significant deficit in the public finances.

In 2013-14 the annual deficit is expected to be around £111 billion which is still 6.8% of GDP, although this is set to fall to £51 billion (or 2.7% of GDP) by the end of 2016-17. On the other hand, national debt levels remain high at £1.3 trillion rising to £1.5 trillion by the end of 2016-17.

So what are the prospects for Local Government you may ask? Well the recent improvement in the UK economy is of course very welcome news but it will not change the need for further austerity measures to drive down the deficit in public finances. The most recent Local Government Financial Settlement indicates a net reduction in the aggregate Settlement Funding Assessment of 9.4% in 2014-15 and 13.2% in 2015-16. When income from council tax, public health funding and the Better Care Fund for integration of social care services with Health are included, there is an overall reduction in local government spending power of 2.9% in 2014-15 and a further 1.8% reduction in 2015-16.

On a positive note, the increase in business rates in 2014-15 has been capped at 2%, with the additional cost being met by central government. Also, the previously proposed additional top-slicing of New Homes Bonus funding, in order to transfer funds to the Local Enterprise Partnerships, will not now take place. The funding of public services in Dorset will see the County Council's Settlement Funding reduce from £89.9 million in 2013-14 (as adjusted) to £81.7 million in 2014-15 and £70.5 million in 2016-17 – a reduction of 22% [19.4 million] over this two year period, which is on top of the £60.0 million already saved in the past three years. It is imperative, therefore, that we continue to look for efficiency savings in everything we do, and look to make radical and far reaching changes in service delivery in

order to maintain or improve the quality of life for our residents, within an ever reducing budget.

It is also important that we work closely with all of our public service partners in Dorset to make public funds go further; collaborating wherever possible and making the best use of the resources available.

Adult Social Care now accounts for 43% of our net budget but is spent on just 4% of the population. We are all living longer. We should not regret growing older, it is a privilege denied to many, however providing and caring for an aging population comes at a significant cost to this Council and is growing year on year.

I am convinced we cannot address the pressures of increased demand for both health and social care as well as respond to the uncertainties of the Care Bill on our own. Our success with the Better Together transformation award establishes us as being one of the most ambitious partnerships in the country. This work will be vital to enable us to maximise the opportunities with the Better Care Fund, to shift resources across health and social care from institutional spend to greater community and primary care support. Pooling our resources with Health in this way will be the key to protecting the role of social care into the future.

We will soon have joint plans in place for integrated services in 2014-15 and we are working very closely with health colleagues, through the Better Together project, to utilise future funding in the most cost effective manner.

The success of the Dorset Waste Partnership has demonstrated the potential for efficiency savings through working together to deliver a key service. In the areas where 'Recycle for Dorset' has been rolled out, recycling rates are now hitting 60% or better. We must now build on this model of cross authority partnership to achieve further efficiencies over the next five years.

This is why it is so important for us to continue to apply good business principles and business management to the financial wellbeing of this Council and the communities we serve, thereby reaping the benefit of this approach as we continue to deal with the loss of grant settlement.

As Winston Churchill once said ... *"Difficulties mastered are opportunities won."*

Over the past three years, through our Meeting Future Challenges Programme, this council has achieved, progressively, in real terms, savings of over £60 million pa, largely through pay restraint, re-structuring and efficiency savings. Overall, staffing levels have reduced by over 700 full time equivalents during this period. And whilst there may have been some impact on front-line services; the impact on service users has been relatively small.

However, over the next three years we are faced with having to find another £43 million in savings, which it is acknowledged, can not be achieved by more of the same. We need to embrace change. The Forward Together Transformation programme, is therefore key to the delivery our stated priorities of Economic Development for the County of Dorset and the Health and Well-being of our residents. It will require a different approach; a more radical and reforming approach and one that promotes Greater Independence, Smarter Services and Empowered People.

To this end, during 2014, as part of the outward looking aspects, we intend to embark on a major engagement and consultation exercise with the people of Dorset and our partners to help frame our future plans. The Chief Executive and I will also be holding meetings with staff and partners across the county to listen to their views. To facilitate transformation, we

have set aside an initial Transformation Reserve of £2 million to be applied on an 'invest to save' basis. This will ensure that we have the necessary resources to do the job and can meet any upfront costs. But, in the meantime, we must live within our means and present a balanced budget over the next three years.

So far, against our £43 million target, we have identified around £28 million in potential savings from 10 key areas, in the Forward Together change programme, including adult social care, transport, highways delivery models and children's services. We have also identified £14.6 million as savings through changing the way we do things. This will require a whole authority approach, looking to systematically challenge what we do and then re-design services to better meet customer needs. As part of this process we will be looking extremely closely at how our spending compares to others in order to achieve similar or better outcomes at lower cost.

Even with the significant level of savings that have been identified we are likely to fall short of meeting the £15.1 million target in 2014-15 by around half a million pounds, although we expect to achieve far more than this in future years, through Forward Together. To avoid having to make unnecessary cuts in the short term, I propose to find the shortfall in 2014-15 from our general balances which, after applying the £0.5 million, we estimate will amount to around £18 million at 31 March 2014. This one-off action will of course increase the target savings required in 2015-16. I can assure the tax payers of Dorset that this Council's finances remain very sound, with earmarked reserves amounting to around £30 million to meet future commitments.

As John F. Kennedy once said ... *"Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future."*

I can also confirm that the Council has so far recovered over 95% of the sums that were invested temporarily in Icelandic banks, prior to the banking crisis. This is very good news for the Council and Dorset's council tax payers.

Chairman, I would now like to turn to the capital budget. You will recall, I feel sure, the comments made by me on previous occasions that despite current funding constraints we must continue to invest in our future. This means maintaining and improving the buildings and infrastructure we need for the future, whilst rationalising and reducing our property holdings across the County. Health and safety requirements will always be a priority and there are growing demands for school places and infrastructure improvements that cannot be ignored. In the current year we have either completed or nearly completed a number of major projects, including the STEPS Club for Young People in Weymouth, Dorchester Leisure Centre, Chesil Cove Primary School, Durlston Castle redevelopment, [Phase 1], Christchurch Library redevelopment and not forgetting the £37 million capital investment to deliver the Purbeck Review – the three to two tier school re-organisation.

Looking ahead over the next three years we are planning to undertake the following capital projects, many of which are 'invest to save' projects, such as i) Whole Authority provision for Business Change, Cost Effectiveness Improvements and Infrastructure Maintenance through ICT ii) East Dorset Civic Centre – jointly funded with East Dorset District Council and iii) further roll out of the Assets and Workstyle project in County Hall (Spaces for Work).

We are also investing in replacement IT systems for adult social care (AIS), Children's Social Care (RAISE) and the Library Management System, as well as a major Schools Basic Need Programme, improving disabled access through Schools Access Initiative (SAI) projects, essential repairs to Hayward Main Bridge at Shillingstone and a new Salt Barn at the Charminster Depot. We should also not forget the considerable investment in Superfast Broadband, with the first rollout for Bridport, Charmouth and Chideock announced on the 5

February. The first phase is expected to make high-speed fibre optic technology available to around 10,000 Dorset homes and businesses, with the first customers connected by June.

Chairman, we are doing all of this without increasing our borrowing above the policy agreed last year. The aim of the policy is to get to a position in 2016/17 where the underlying need to borrow does not increase unless funded from other sources. This effectively limits the size of the Capital Programme to grant funding, capital receipt funding, and Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay (RCCO) but still enables the Council to invest over £188 million in capital projects over the next three years. There is a future, and this progressive capital investment programme confirms our commitment to the communities of Dorset that we mean to ensure, as best we can, that care is taken to look after present and future generations.

Chairman, I now move onto the revenue budget for the Council Year 2014-15. The recommendation by the Cabinet is for a Net Budget Requirement for 2014-15 of £272.4 million, which after allowing for commitments and changes to specific grant funding, is a reduction of £15.1 million, or 5.5% less than the equivalent figure for 2013-14. Proposals to achieve the required annual revenue saving have been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees and have been the subject of initial consultation with the public and with the business community. Further consultation will take place on individual proposals, together with the appropriate impact assessments, as many of these proposals are firmed up.

For the last three years this Council has, quite rightly, maintained a freeze on Council Tax with the help of council tax freeze grants. However, this Council, along with many other Councils, whether they be County, Unitary, Metropolitan or District, has reached the point whereby any further reduction in funding is likely to have a serious impact on the delivery of front line services. Consequently it is now necessary to provide for a modest increase of just under 2% in order to balance the budget. Two percent on the county council precept is £23.22 per annum for a Band D council tax payer, or around 45 pence per week, which is in line with the current low level of inflation.

I believe this is a small price to pay to avoid a further £1.8 million cut in the base budget. The other important consideration, when reaching this decision is that freeze grants are monies which are subject to the whim of Government. The latest Government settlement claims to have included previous grants in the base. Even so, there still remains a distinct possibility of the funds being removed in the next Spending Round. Taking the freeze grant is a significant risk, like for example 'kicking the can down the street' rather than solving the problem of litter.

As George Bernard Shaw once said ... *"We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future."*

The Peer Challenge placed an emphasis on the Council needing to be Member-Led and much work has been done to enable this to happen. Progress has been made in a number of areas, but there is still much to do. Get engaged Members, be part of shaping the future. In recognition of this change of approach Chairman, I offer a suggestion, that subject to Cabinet agreement, every Member of this Council be granted a Divisional budget of £5,000 pa, to be spent on the provision of services, which are the responsibility of this Authority, but in a way that is sensitive to the immediate needs of the individual communities we were elected to serve. Detail of the rules governing such expenditure will be made known to colleagues before commencement of the scheme, which I shall suggest is initially for one year, subject to review after 9 months.

In concluding Chairman, I felt it appropriate to remind ourselves that there is little in this world that is entirely new or unique.

Many who know me well will be aware of my love of history and the fact that, sometimes, lessons from the past can influence thinking in dealing with the problems of the day. However, it would seem that when it comes to National Governments, they never seem to learn these lessons, I quote:

*“The budget should be balanced, the Treasury should be filled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest Rome will become bankrupt. People must again learn to work instead of living on public assistance.” - Cicero 55 BC*

Evidently we've learnt little over the past 2,000 years or so. In moving the recommendations Chairman, can I leave Members with a Henry Ford quote ... *“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.”*

Members if we are serious about embracing change, and I believe we should be, then these words by Henry Ford need to be our mantra.

Thank you Chairman.