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DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2019

Present: Cllrs Tony Alford, Jon Andrews, Richard Biggs, Cherry Brooks, Dave Bolwell, Piers Brown, Graham Carr-Jones, Simon Christopher, Kelvin Clayton, Robin Cook, Janet Dover (left meeting at 9.21pm), Jean Dunseith, Matthew Hall, Paul Harrison, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby, Rebecca Knox, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Howard Legg, Robin Legg, Jon Orrell, Andrew Parry, Mary Penfold, Bill Pipe, Byron Quayle, Molly Rennie, Maria Roe (Left meeting at 9.21pm), Jane Somper, Clare Sutton, David Taylor, David Tooke, Daryl Turner, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams, John Worth, Jill Haynes, Mike Dyer, Mike Parkes, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Beryl Ezzard, Andrew Starr, Derek Beer, David Walsh, Cathy Lugg, David Gray, Toni Coombs, Gill Taylor, Pete Barrow, Brian Heatley, Pauline Batstone (Chairman), Tim Cook, Nick Ireland, Andy Canning, Paul Kimber, Laura Miller, David Morgan, Louie O'Leary, Ray Bryan, Shane Bartlett, Val Potheary, Belinda Ridout, Mark Roberts, Julie Robinson, Spencer Flower, David Shortell, Susan Cocking, Gary Suttle, Roland Tarr, Bill Trite, Les Fry, Peter Wharf and Rod Adkins

Apologies: Cllrs Mike Barron, Alex Brenton, Emma Parker, Tony Ferrari, Barry Goringe, Ryan Holloway and Simon Gibson

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Manager), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Sarah Parker (Executive Director of People - Children), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place) and Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

15. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Declarations of Interest

In respect on item 8 on the agenda, Cllr D Turner declared a potential pecuniary interest as he was in receipt of an Army Pension. He further advised that his wife may be in a position of benefit as a result of the recommendation. Cllr Turner confirmed that he would not take part in the debate or the vote on the item.

Cllr C Lugg and Cllr B Quayle made a similar declaration in respect of item 8 on the agenda.

17. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported the sad loss of Ray Nowak a former member of Weymouth & Portland Borough Council who passed away in May. He was a longstanding and well respected local figure in the Weymouth & Portland community.

The Chairman advised the Council that in future eulogies would only be taken for members of Dorset Council.

The Chairman reported on a number of civic events that she and the Vice-Chairman had attended, including the Wimborne Civic Day and Mayor Making in Dorchester and Blandford. The Chairman advised that she was pleased to have attended the re-signing of the Armed Forces Covenant at Bovington where Cllr David Walsh, Chairman of the Armed Forces Covenant Board in Dorset, had signed the covenant on behalf of Dorset Council.

The Chairman also advised on a recent Danceathon organised in County Hall as a fund-raiser by Friends of Dorset Care Leavers. She suggested that as all Dorset councillors were legally “corporate parents” this was an opportunity to act as corporate grandparents, and encouraged councillors to make a contribution to the charity.

18. Public Participation - Questions and Statements

All the public questions, statements together with the responses from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders were set out in the Appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

19. Public Participation - Petitions and Deputations

The Chairman accepted receipt of a petition from Ms Sarah Kerslake and her son of over 1,000 signatures in relation to Budmouth College.

The Chairman advised that as there were a large number of members of the public in attendance at the meeting items 8 and 9 would be taken later in the agenda. This would allow the matters of public interest to be considered first.

20. Announcements and reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to reflect on the work of the council to date, highlighting the promise of cross-party working to shape key policies through the setting up of cross-party Executive Advisory Panels. These included work on the Local Plan, Climate Change, Economic Growth and Development. Further panels were to be established to address the areas of IT and Digital matters, relationships with Town & Parish Councils, Leisure Services and Social Care.

The Leader of the Council advised that a letter had been sent to the Secretary of State regarding SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) funding following the last meeting of Full Council. He highlighted that this was a

national issue, but he would continue to work for what was in the best interest for Dorset. He referred to the challenges faced by Budmouth College and advised that the council would receive a Peer Review in October. This was an opportunity for councillors from other councils to look at what Dorset was doing and make sure that councillors learnt lessons as the new Dorset Council progressed.

21. **Questions from Councillors**

Cllr B Ezzard and Cllr K Wheller asked questions of the Leader of Council and the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Early Help. These along with the responses are attached to the minutes at Appendix 2.

A question from Cllr A Brenton, who was absent from the meeting is also attached for information.

22. **Climate Change**

The following motion was proposed by Cllr D Turner, seconded by Cllr B Quayle and supported by Cllrs J Andrews, G Taylor, J Dunseith, K Wheller, R Knox and B Ridout:-

“Dorset Council notes:

that the impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world.

that the ‘Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C’, published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, (a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and (b) confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.

Governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to act. Strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits; and that recognising this, a growing number of UK local authorities have already passed 'Climate Emergency' motions.

Dorset Council therefore commits to:

Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’ that requires urgent action.

Make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2040 or earlier.

Achieve 100% clean energy across the Council’s full range of functions by 2040 or earlier.

Ensure that all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with a shift to zero carbon by 2040 or earlier.

Support and work with all other relevant agencies towards making the entire area zero carbon within the same timescale; Suggested interim targets are:

30% by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 85% by 2035, these figures have been selected because it is the last few % that are hardest to eradicate from the system. Having these targets dates will concentrate minds.

Ensure that political and chief officer leadership teams embed this work in all areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities, ensuring that any recommendations are fully costed and that the Executive and Scrutiny functions review council activities taking account of production and consumption emissions and produce an action plan within 12 months, together with budget actions and a measured baseline;

Dorset Council Scrutiny Panels will consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies;

Work with, influence and inspire partners across the district, county and region to help deliver this goal through all relevant strategies, plans and shared resources by developing a series of meetings, events and partner workshops;

And that Dorset Council and partners take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future;

Report on the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry that our pensions plan and other investments have, and review the Council's investment strategy to give due consideration to climate change impacts in the investment portfolio;

Ensure that all reports in preparation for the 2020/21 budget cycle and investment strategy will take into account the actions the council will be required to take to address this emergency;

Call on the UK Government to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and ask local MPs to do likewise;

Consider other actions that could be implemented, including (but not restricted to): renewable energy generation and storage, providing electric vehicle infrastructure and encouraging alternatives to private car use, increasing the efficiency of buildings, in particular to address fuel poverty; proactively using local planning powers to accelerate the delivery of net carbon new developments and communities, coordinating a series of information and training events to raise awareness and share good practice."

Decision

That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Climate Change Executive Advisory Panel for further consideration and report back to Full Council.

23. **Climate Change**

The following motion was proposed by Cllr K Clayton seconded by Cllr M Roe and supported by Cllrs B Heatley, J Orrell, N Ireland, D Bolwell, R Tarr, B Ezzard, D Taylor, S Williams, M Rennie, D Tooke and R Hughes

“We know that climate breakdown is already causing serious damage around the world. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2018 ‘Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C’ describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise and confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action. As many local councils now recognise, and as the outline 'Climate Emergency' motion we passed in May recognises, we have a duty to act NOW, and cannot wait for national governments to change their policies.

In this context, this motion proposes that **Dorset Council commits to:**

1. **Make the Council’s activities net-zero carbon by 2030;**
2. **Work with partners and stake-holders** to achieve the same across the whole of the Council area;
3. Develop a Dorset wide **transport strategy** that discourages car use, encourages walking and cycling, and drastically improves rail and bus services;
4. Develop an **energy strategy** that provides local renewable energy generation and storage, increases the efficiency of buildings and addresses fuel poverty;
5. Develop a new Dorset Local Plan that ensures all **planning decisions** are consistent with a shift to net-zero carbon by 2030;
6. End any investment by the **Dorset Local Government Pension Fund** in the fossil fuel industry or other activities that have an impact on climate change;
7. Ensure that our net-zero carbon by 2030 ambition is reflected in **ALL strategies and plans**, that all policy papers include a Climate Impact Assessment;
8. Require the cross-party climate change panel to report back to Council, within nine months, to provide a **time table and action plan** detailing how all the above can be achieved;
9. Take steps to **proactively consult** and include the opinions of residents, particularly young people, in all of the above, and consider setting up citizens’ assemblies; and
10. Call on **the UK Government** to provide the powers, resources and help with funding to make this possible, and lobby local MPs to do likewise.”

Decision

That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Climate Change Executive Advisory Panel for consideration and report back to Full Council.

24. **Social Mobility**

In inviting the proposer to put the motion, the Chairman advised that she fully supported the proposal and would welcome further examination of how the council could address the poverty which blights some parts of Dorset.

The following notice of motion was proposed by Cllr P Barrow, seconded by Cllr P Kimber and supported by Cllrs H Legg, C Sutton, L O'Leary, J Andrews, J Worth, A Canning, A Starr, S Cocking, L Fry, R Hughes and N Ireland

Background

Recent reports have revealed that low wages and poor social mobility are key issues in some areas of Dorset. Weymouth and Portland is particularly disadvantaged, but so are some other areas of the County.

The Social Mobility Commission's "State of the Nation 2017" report, assessed social mobility across all local authority areas in the Country. Weymouth and Portland was placed third from bottom of England's 324 local authority areas.

A House of Commons Library Briefing Paper, CBP 8400, published in 2019, assessed social mobility across all parliamentary constituencies. South Dorset was placed last among the 533 constituencies in England.

A report on the future of seaside towns, published in 2019 by The House of Commons Select Committee on Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities assessed challenges faced by all seaside areas. Weymouth and Portland was referred to on several occasions, with the report noting particularly severe problems with low levels of attainment in secondary schools; reliance on part-time jobs, with the lowest wages in the UK; severe difficulty in encouraging students to return after graduation; and a population of transient renters in low-cost housing that is three times higher than the rest of Dorset.

End Child Poverty released a report in May 2019 on children living in poverty across the UK. In Weymouth and Portland 30% of children live in poverty, with particularly high levels in Weymouth East (39%), Melcombe Regis (39%) and Underhill (40%).

The GMB Union released a report in May 2019 that assessed wage levels across the UK using ONS statistics. This revealed that 25% of jobs in Weymouth and Portland pay less than the Real Living Wage with 6,500 working residents in Weymouth and Portland being paid less than £9 an hour. More than half of this total was represented by part-time jobs, giving evidence

of an under-employed workforce on poverty wages. There are also many other areas in Dorset that have similar issues with low pay.

Many of our most disadvantaged residents are denied life chances to which they aspire. If we fail to improve social mobility we risk parts of our County becoming blighted communities.

Dorset's micro-climate and world-class environment attracts older more affluent residents to live in the County and our economy benefits significantly from their personal spending. They in turn rely on a resilient and economically successful semi-skilled and skilled workforce for their lifestyle aspirations. It's in all our interests that the workforce is supported and encouraged to remain in Dorset. Improving social mobility will provide the key underpinning to Dorset's aspirations of future prosperity and is therefore vitally important to all of us.

It is recognised that work to improve social mobility is already underway with activity in areas such as economic growth, housing, community safety, health and education. However, given the evidence in recent reports we need to acknowledge that we need to do more.

There is much to do to set up our new council and it is appreciated that it is very early days. However, surely this does not stop us being ambitious for our community and committing to a clear course of action from the very beginning.

Motion

“Council acknowledges that improving social mobility requires a decisive co-ordinated effort. Council needs to provide visible and effective leadership to lead a multi-agency approach that drives improvement.

Council resolves that a Cabinet member, together with an Executive Director, will be accountable for improving social mobility in Dorset, with an initial focus on Weymouth and Portland. Together, they will be tasked to create and lead a multi-agency Team that will develop and deliver an overarching strategic plan. This Team should ensure all action is effectively targeted, accountability is clear and that progress can be effectively assessed. The initial Team meeting should take place as soon as possible and an initial Plan should be in place within twelve months.

Council has already declared it will work in an inclusive manner across all its work. Council will ensure that the Team involves all stakeholders with relevant experiences and skills. There is a pressing need to ensure that action is taken where it is most needed and that communities can see progress being made. To this end Council will invite relevant community groups to join the Team, both to provide valuable inputs and to provide progress reports to the community.

Council will task the relevant overview and scrutiny committee to review progress at quarterly intervals so that independent challenge and scrutiny is in place.

A progress report should be a standing agenda item for all Cabinet meetings, so that progress can be assessed and momentum maintained.”

Report references

Social Mobility Commission report “State of the Nation 2017”

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017 -
_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662744/State_of_the_Nation_2017_-_Social_Mobility_in_Great_Britain.pdf)

House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number CBP 8400

<https://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-8400#fullreport>

The future of seaside towns report

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201719/ldselect/ldseaside/320/320.pdf>

End Child Poverty

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

GMB report on wages

<https://www.gmb-southern.org.uk/news/dorset-wilts-residents-earning-less-living-wage>

Decision

That the Notice of Motion be referred to the Economic Development Executive Advisory Panel for consideration and report back to Full Council.

25. Safe Passage Dorset

The following motion was proposed by Cllr V Pothecary, seconded by Cllr S Flower and supported by Cllrs P Batstone, K Wheller, T Cook, S Jespersen, B Ridout, M Penfold, J Somper, C Sutton, C Jones and D Tooke

Background

80 years ago, at a time of great economic crisis, and in just 10 months, 10,000 mostly Jewish children were brought to Britain from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, saving them from Nazi persecution. This magnificent effort by the people of Britain became known as the Kinder Transport.

The threat to children fleeing war and oppression is now at the highest level it has been in the last 70 years. We are witnessing the biggest humanitarian crisis since World War II, with over 70 million displaced worldwide by war, persecution and conflict. 25 million of these are refugees and more than 50% are children under 18yrs old.

Lord Dubs and Safe Passage are calling upon every local authority across the country to commit to accepting “a minimum of 3 unaccompanied or vulnerable children per year every year for the next 10 years”. Across the country, this would equate to the 10,000 child refugees brought here 80 years ago.

Safe Passage are committed to Safe and Legal routes for child refugees, so not only would these children be properly authenticated by agencies such as UNHCR working with the UK Home Office, but they would arrive by a SAFE and LEGAL ROUTE, not as spontaneous arrivals having taken immense risks in flimsy dinghies, or under or inside lorries. Furthermore, their care would be ensured through a fully government funded scheme and would not be an ongoing burden on local taxation.

On the 8th November last year Safe Passage (Dorset) obtained Dorset County Councils unanimous vote to providing their strongest support to their campaign and to carry this forward to Dorset Council at the earliest opportunity.

Notice of Motion

“That, provided Government fully funds the programme. Dorset Council will give the strongest possible support to Safe Passage (Dorset) by accepting a minimum of three unaccompanied and vulnerable refugee children per year, over a ten year period.”

The Chairman invited Mr B Sullivan, on behalf of the deputation, to make a statement in respect of Safe Passage following which members debated the motion before them. Details of the statement are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Early Years indicated that, in principal, he supported Lord Dubs’s concept and the notice of motion and many councillors spoke in support of the motion. However it was agreed that it was important that the Safe Passage project was not a financial burden to the council and the children it already looked after. Therefore central government support for the scheme was essential.

It was proposed by Cllr V Potheary seconded by Cllr S Flower

Decision

That provided Government fully funds the programme. Dorset Council will give the strongest possible support to Safe Passage (Dorset) by accepting a minimum of three unaccompanied and vulnerable refugee children per year, over a ten year period.

26. Academisation of Budmouth College, Chickerell

The following motion was proposed by Cllr R Hope seconded by Cllr G Taylor and supported by Cllrs D Gray, J Dunseith, S Jones, R Legg, D Morgan, N Ireland, M Rennie, P Kimber and P Barrow

Background

Budmouth College has been in the heart of the community for over 30 years and has worked hard to build an ethos and culture to support the community it serves. Although it is acknowledged that there are aspects that do need to change it has a firm foundation, a foundation which needs to be preserved. This school is unique in that it serves one of the most deprived parts of the Dorset Council area which brings its own challenges, challenges that this school has risen to over the years.

There are significant concerns in the local area from students, parents and the wider community about the proposed academisation of Budmouth College. These concerns were the subject of a Notice of Motion to Weymouth Town Council on 26 June 2019 which was brought by Cllr Fuhrmann and supported by Weymouth Town Council. There was a request from WTC that academisation and the position that Budmouth College finds itself in should be highlighted to Dorset Council.

The school has a new Head Teacher who has an excellent track record and is held in high regard; the senior management team has been changed and feedback from teachers and parents since he took office have been positive and reflect a wider sense that the setting is robustly addressing the concerns raised at the last Ofsted inspection with positive and measurable results.

There has been a letter sent to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds from senior councillors and officers expressing concerns regarding the process of academisation at Budmouth College; these concerns both reflect and extend those raised by the community.

(This letter has been the subject of a leak to the media which is in no way condoned)

Motion

This council:

- a) Supports and acknowledges the work of senior councillors and this Council's Executive Director of People - Children in writing to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, stating their concerns regarding the proposed academisation of Budmouth College.
- b) Will make further representations to the Secretary of State for Education seeking his agreement to a delay in the timetable for academisation whilst the progress of Budmouth College since the last Ofsted report is assessed and further consultation is undertaken.

c) Will seek confirmation from the Regional Schools Commissioner of the reasons for the choice of intended academy provider and evidence of the adequacy of the due diligence carried out to ensure the appropriateness of the chosen organisation supplying the service.

Cllr N Ireland indicated that, as a parent of children educated at the college, he supported the motion, however he also wished to add an additional recommendation as an amendment and this was set out below:-

“(d) recognises by immediately dismissing Budmouth College's IEB that the said body has failed to adequately support the local community, staff, parents and pupils, both present and prospective, in acknowledging their concerns over the imposition of a single sponsor by the RSC, particularly in relation to the sponsor's past history with SEND provision and support in other settings, and furthermore failed to adequately represent those concerns back to the RSC or Secretary of State for Education.”

The amendment was seconded by Cllr C Sutton and the original proposer and seconder supported the additional wording as set out in (d) above.

As the proposer of the amendment, Cllr N Ireland advised that the council needed to send a strong message that the Interim Executive Board (IEB) was failing residents, the wider local community and the pupils of the school. This message should be sent by dismissing the IEB with immediate effect.

There were currently a number of issues at Budmouth College, including an increase in the number of exclusions, more pupils being home schooled, the school ethos was poor, there were transport issues and concerns about SEND. This was the opportunity for the council to take action as the IEB had failed the residents of the Weymouth and Portland area.

In debating the amendment, a number of members felt unable to support the addition of (d) but would consider supporting the original motion. Responding to questions regarding the legal position and timeframe, the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Early Help confirmed that dismissing the Board would not stop the process of academisation and delay could potentially be more damaging to the school. He further explained that it was important for the school and the council to maintain dialog with the Secretary of State. Some members also argued that the amendment, if passed, would only prolong the uncertainty for the school community.

The Portfolio Holder further advised that the board consisted of individuals very experienced in these matters, including a respected former Head Teacher. He also confirmed that the board, would only continue, in its current format until 31 August 2019.

Other members expressed concerns that some of those people serving on the IEB, may become governors to the board once Budmouth College became an Academy. They challenged whether this was considered appropriate considering the IEB's failings to date.

As the seconder to the amendment, Cllr C Sutton stated that as the Local Education Authority, the council had few powers but it could dismiss the board if it is considered that it had not discharged its responsibilities or acted in an accountable manner.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was **LOST**.

Members returned to the original motion and upon being put to the vote the motion was **CARRIED**

Decision

This council:

- a) Supports and acknowledges the work of senior councillors and this Council's Executive Director of People - Children in writing to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, stating their concerns regarding the proposed academisation of Budmouth College.
- b) Will make further representations to the Secretary of State for Education seeking his agreement to a delay in the timetable for academisation whilst the progress of Budmouth College since the last Ofsted report is assessed and further consultation is undertaken.
- c) Will seek confirmation from the Regional Schools Commissioner of the reasons for the choice of intended academy provider and evidence of the adequacy of the due diligence carried out to ensure the appropriateness of the chosen organisation supplying the service.

DURATION OF MEETING

Following a vote, it was agreed that the meeting would continue beyond the 3 hour time limit that was set within the constitution.

27. Revenues and Benefits Policies and Schemes

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder, Cllr P Warf presented the report and recommendation. The proposal was seconded by Cllr R Knox.

Decision

That Council agree, effective from 1 April 2019, that 100% of all income from War Disablement or War Widows Pension be disregarded when calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit in line with the resolution as set out at Appendix A of the report.

28. Adoption of Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan

In presenting the plan the Portfolio Holder for Planning advised that it was essential that the council had an up-to-date statutory policy framework for considering planning applications for waste development. The council also

needed to comply with the requirements of the statutory/consequential orders concerning shaping Dorset Council which required a council-wide local plan by 2024.

Members were reminded that the plan was submitted to the Secretary of State in March 2018 and the Planning Inspector's report had considered the plan to be legally compliant and sound.

Some members opposed the plan and others expressed concerns regarding the assumption of business as usual in respect of not reducing the current volumes of waste. There were also concerns around the site facilities being fit for purpose.

In response the Portfolio Holder advised that the plan had been 6 years in the making and that the adoption of the plan would provide Dorset Council with an up-to-date policy framework. He stated that it was essential for a plan to accord with the latest national policies. It would provide the council with greater certainty in securing acceptable development that provides for Dorset's waste needs in a manner that was consistent with the Waste Plan.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walsh and seconded by Cllr B Trite

Decision

That Council: -

- (a) Adopts the Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset Waste Plan subject to the inclusion of the main modifications that are appended to the Inspector's Report;
- (b) Confirms that the formal adoption date will begin two weeks from the date at which both BCP Council and Dorset Council have resolved to adopt the plan;
- (c) Delegates to the Lead Member for Planning, after consultation with the Executive Director for Place:
 - (i) Any 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;
 - (ii) Authority to expedite any technical/procedural matters associated with adoption of the plan, including those connected with Dorset Council's role as the Competent Authority on matters relating to the Habitats Regulations Assessment 1 of the Plan.

29. Urgent items

There were no urgent items to report.

30. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to report.

Appendix 1 - Public Questions and Statements
Appendix 2 - Questions from Councillors

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.45 pm

Chairman

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Full Council – 18 July 2019

Questions submitted for Public Participation Period

Question -1 Submitted by Mr P Jordan

Use of Council Buildings

Pre-amble:

My Question, follows the welcome & important changes that have led to Dorset Council's holding of this full Council Meeting, at this more democratically accessible evening time of day, in this Chamber i.e.

- NOT during, what is for many, the normal working day &/or

&/or

- NOT using SWH, that's not only too small, but also - despite holding a praiseworthy BREEAM status
- it was controversial before it was built, lacks good planning internally & externally e.g. by location:
- it's own access is difficult + makes Charles St "development" more problematic than it already was

So bearing the above in mind, & in the interests of further integrating & making Council work & related support more efficient

- perhaps in a Dorchester wide Property Review of Council (& other public?) land & property assets together with their uses & vital issues like communications, energy & asbestos etc – such that public assets are maximised in the public interest e.g.

Question:

"Is Dorset Council, also considering making full use of County Hall (Chamber & Committee facilities etc) & declaring SWH surplus? "

Response from Cllr Peter Wharf

"The Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Infrastructure is carrying out a full review of the Dorset Council's Estate. We are gathering information on all of the accommodation, depots and land which we own which will allow us to provide an Asset Management Strategy fit for the future needs of Dorset Council."

Question - 2 Submitted by Mr P Jordan

Climate Change

Pre-amble:

Thankfully, & though as you, Dorset Council, made your almost unanimous Climate Emergency Declaration this last May;

Given: the WHO (UN World Health Organisation) definition of “Emergency” i.e.

Emergency is a term describing a state. It is a managerial term, demanding decision and follow-up in terms of extra-ordinary measures (Oxford Pocket Dictionary, 1992). A "state of emergency" demands to "be declared" or imposed by somebody in authority, who, at a certain moment, will also lift it. Thus, it is usually defined in time and space, it requires threshold values to be recognized, and it implies rules of engagement and an exit strategy. Conceptually, it relates best to Response.

& given too your reported lack of Climate Emergency application, when making decisions on a range of matters, including e.g.

Neighbourhood Plans, your own Forward Plans & Government funding for Norchester – a “Greenfield site” of the type that one can’t imagine being backed by the current Climate Change Committee Chair now, or for that matter as perhaps our most distinguished Environment Minister over 20 years ago (when he specifically backed brownfield site development)

Question:

“How & in what ways are you engaging/progressing towards sustainable success & for that matter equally sustainable exit?”

Response from Cllr Ray Bryan

“Dorset Council recognises the importance of dealing with the issue of climate change and since declaring a climate emergency in May 2019 at the first Full Council meeting of the new Council has started work to tackle this pressing issue. As the new Dorset Council develops there is a significant opportunity to fully embed action on climate change within Council services and our wider leadership role.

As a start, the Council has established an specific Executive Advisory Panel on Climate Change – who's role will be to develop the Councils policy and action on tackling climate change and make recommendations directly to the Councils Cabinet. The Advisory Panel first met on 2nd July and heard evidence of climate change the implication for Dorset and the need and opportunities for action.

To support the Council's work in this area a senior officer's technical group is being drawn together from across services to provide technical support to the advisory panel and shape climate action. The group will ensure that expertise will be drawn from across the Council particularly from services which will have a critical role in tackling some of the major challenges such as transport, waste, buildings and planning etc. Work has already begun at hast on developing a new local plan and a specific group will be looking at climate change.

Over the coming weeks members of the panel will be considering their key priorities for action and officers have also been gathering initial evidence of current action by the former Dorset Councils and opportunities to take climate action across Council services and responsibilities, as these take shape in the new Dorset Council. The Council has also committed to employing additional dedicated staff resource to assist in the coordination and development of Dorset Council response. Further meetings are also being held with representatives from extinction rebellion later this month, who have been invited to present to the next Advisory Panel in September 2019.”

Question 3 – submitted by Linda Poulson

Garden Communities Fund

Question:

“In the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2018, the North Dorchester Area was classified as a 'no potential development' area. Considerable evidence was provided for the 2015 Local Plan to show how development here would damage the landscape, community, heritage, hydrology and so on. The evidence hasn't altered, consultation on the review is incomplete, so when West Dorset District Council applied for funds from the Government's Garden Communities fund, did it consider sites across the District or only the proposed 'North Dorchester' site?”

Response from Cllr David Walsh

“West Dorset District Council argued during the preparation of the 2015 local plan that the area north of Dorchester was not suitable for development. The inspector however concluded that in the review of the local plan the council should identify land to meet long term development needs at or in the vicinity of Dorchester, and required this commitment to be stated in the plan to ensure that it was sound. He also commented that it was not obvious that there were other or better alternatives to this site.

The 'preferred options' consultation document for the West Dorset, Weymouth & Portland Local Plan review, published for consultation in 2018, suggested the land north of Dorchester as a potential area for development.

There is more work to be done to test the area's suitability for development, including for example further work on the heritage implications and infrastructure requirements. The Garden Communities initiative will help to fund this more detailed work, and will also provide assistance and support in ensuring quality of development, infrastructure provision, and delivery arrangements

The Garden Communities funding was only available for larger development sites and there were no other sites that had been considered in the local plan consultation that were regarded as eligible for the funding. “

Question 4 – submitted by Kate Hebditch

West Dorset Area Local Plan Review

Question:

“I note from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 25 June that work on the Local Plan Review for the West Dorset area has ceased. Will the responses from the public consultation on that Review be published? And if so, when?”

Response from Cllr David Walsh

“The responses from the public consultation have all been collated now and are due to be published on the website this week. The results of consultation on the area local plan reviews will be taken into account in preparing the new Dorset Council Local Plan.”

Question 5 – submitted by Professor Marfleet

Economic Development Executive Advisory Panel

Question:

“What is the status of motions passed by the Full Council and which are referred to the Panel?”

Response from Cllr Gary Suttle

“Some motions are debated at the first full Council meeting following receipt of a motion and a decision is made by the Council about the motion at that first meeting. Such a motion, if agreed, becomes the decision or policy of the Council. Examples of such motions to be decided at the first available meeting are those concerning Safe Passage Dorset and Budmouth College, both of which will be considered today.

Other motions are presented to the full Council and then referred to a committee or panel to consider the detail and make recommendations back to a later Council meeting. Motions referred to a committee or panel have not been passed by or supported by the Council but are referred straight on to the committee or panel without a debate having taken place. They are referred to a body able to consider the detail on behalf of the Council and make recommendations to be decided later by the Council. Examples of such motions are those concerning climate change and social mobility, all three of which will be presented today and then referred to executive advisory panels for detailed consideration.

Our procedure rules require the proper officer to decide in consultation with the Chairman of Council whether a motion is to be included on the full Council agenda to be debated straightaway or referred to a committee or panel which will make recommendations to be considered and decided upon later by the Council.

There is no prescribed timescale for the recommendations referred to another body to be brought back to full Council. This will depend upon complexity of the issues raised by the motion and the work programme of the committee or panel. “

Question 6 – submitted by Carolyn Emmett

Bus link between Bridport and Crewkerne

Pre-amble:

The car usage of myself, and other people in the Beaminster area, has increased dramatically since this particular bus has stopped passing Colfox at school finish time. In fact the lack of a sensible bus service in general between Bridport and Yeovil has led to a huge increase in car usage in general; and at the same time a greater isolation for those who can't drive. Dorset Council declared Climate Emergency a couple of months ago, as humanity is facing extinction if we don't take urgent action on Climate Change and the other unfolding Ecological Disasters that we face. Given this, I would suggest that the disintegrating public transport system in Dorset is something that needs addressing urgently. An efficient public transport system is a good way of reducing carbon emissions; as well as supporting our younger, older and more vulnerable residents – and others who can't drive.

Question:

So the question I want to ask is – within the understanding that Dorset Council is operating on a miniscule budget – what measures can be taken to reinstate a bus journey between Bridport and Crewkerne (via Broadwindsor) to enable kids to get home from Colfox School? There must be some negotiation with First, tweaking of timetables, etc that could be done. Any action taken urgently needs to happen by September 2019, ready for the new school year. In fact any action on reducing fossil fuel emissions needs to happen urgently because we will all be dead if we don't.

Response from Cllr Ray Bryan

“At the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 July 2019 which was attended by a representative from The Western Area Transport Action Group (WATAG), the route between Bridport, Beaminster, Crewkerne and Yeovil (service 6) was discussed.

The committee has agreed to set up a working group to look at reductions in subsidy for public transport (and the viability of routes) across the county in the context of the climate change emergency. This will include service 6. Until the group has been set up and the review completed, further changes to this service are unlikely to be made. I understand the frustrations caused by the lack of a journey from Colfox School back to Beaminster, Bridport and Crewkerne at the end of the school day but these communities are not in the catchment area for

the school and students are attending by choice, so there is no requirement for the Council to supply transport. The current timetable that is in place does not accommodate this journey.”

Question 7 – submitted by Caroline Lester

Budmouth Sports Centre and Playing Fields

Pre-amble

“The twelve acres of playing fields at Budmouth College are used by the school and are a well-established amenity for local sports groups and organisations at the weekends. You might consider them key to the success of the school and the extra-curricular activities that they currently offer. They are also very important for the local community and form a green lung in the increasingly built-up area in Chickerell. We have received very many questions and comments about this substantial community and educational asset, in particular the issue that they should not be built on further.

The sports centre halls and gym at Budmouth are essential for providing a wide range of indoor physical activities provision for the school and for the wider community. We understand there are historic and ongoing serious subsidence issues with the sports centre, with August 31st floated to staff as a date that the centre would close.

Oliver Letwin MP wrote to us recently to say he would be ‘focussing his attention’ on making the ‘requirement’ to the DfE that Budmouth’s twelve acres of playing fields would only pass to Aspirations Academies Trust on exchange of their Osprey Quay site, for use as Dorset Council’s new special school. As you can perhaps imagine, this is no consolation at all to the many of us who do not welcome the forced academisation of Budmouth. In fact, it is cold comfort indeed, as it could appear that Budmouth’s playing fields are being ‘swapped’ as an asset for the convenience of Dorset Council and their new special school.

Question:

We ask, should Aspirations Academies Trust take over Budmouth College on September 1st, can Dorset Council guarantee:

that the Sports Centre will be maintained and will stay open?

that the land transfer agreement will include a clause that the twelve acres of playing field land will be protected from future development and retained for community use as an amenity in perpetuity?

If the answer is 'no' to either of these points, we suggest that the continued conversion process is most definitely not in the best interests of the school and the local community with regard to these assets, and that further time is essential to ensure that these assets are protected."

Response from Cllr Andrew Parry

The sports centre is part of the school premises and is owned by the Governing Body of Budmouth School. The Governing Body is required to transfer the school premises to the Academy Trust on conversion; under the Academy Act 2010 and in accordance with the Secretary of State's Academy Order. As the Council is not the owner of the school premises it will not be a party to the transfer.

The playing field land at Budmouth School also forms part of the school premises and is owned by the Governing Body. School playing fields are protected by legislation. Should the owner wish to make any transfer or change of use of the playing fields, they would be required to comply with legislation, which may include the need to obtain the Secretary of State's prior approval.

The conversion of Budmouth School has been ordered by the Secretary of State and in accordance with the Academies Act 2010 the Council has a duty to take all reasonable steps to facilitate the conversion of the school into an Academy.

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Full Council - 18 July 2019

Statements to be read out under Agenda item 8

Statement 1 – Cllr Alan Thacker DAPTC

Town and Parish Councils

“I am Councillor Alan Thacker, Chairman of Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak at your meeting to explain the work of the association in supporting parish and town councils in their valuable role as a legitimate tier of local government in Dorset.

Our association has a membership of over 160 local councils across the whole of Dorset, including all the town councils. In total, over 98% of local councils in Dorset are members and 100% of local councils with an electorate over 200.

The association is a democratically elected body, with representatives appointed by each member council. It has a very good network of communication with all its members and provides support and training for them in affiliation with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

This association is keen to build relationships with Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council on behalf of its members and potential members.

The association has a good overview of its members’ needs from large town councils to very small parish councils.

Devolution to town and parish councils will be a fundamental issue for shaping future services. Achieving this in an adequately resourced and cooperative manner is in the interests of all our communities.

Our association believes it is in a unique position to be a positive voice in ensuring that our members are engaged with Dorset Council, not only in collaborative design of services for the many different communities in Dorset, but also in all aspects which would help build relationships and ease the implementation of change.

Our Chief Executive has already been working with your officers to ease the transition of new working arrangements with our members in many practical and cost-effective ways. We hope to continue to help you to the benefit of both our tiers, but most importantly, to the benefit of the communities that we all serve.”

Statement 2 – Mrs Tara Moggeridge

Academisation of Budmouth College

"Government guidelines suggest that formal consultations should include staff and parents as well as pupils and the wider community. However we know that there is no legal obligation to consult on a choice of sponsor when an Academy order is made. Lord Agnew states this in his letter to Children's Services and he says that community representations were made to the headteachers board. We don't know what these were, none of us have had a say. Instead we feel like we have been "frozen out". Parents are entitled to know which trust is coming in, taking over the school and what their intentions are. On Saturday 13th July an article written in Schools week.co.uk states " Dorset Council has told the government it will be 'testing the legality' of what it believes was a flawed consultation over the choice of Aspirations Trust to take over Budmouth College in Weymouth. The Council said that as a foundation school, the government must consult with the schools trustees and the person who appointed them. Members of the IEB, appointed by the Council, are currently acting as trustees. The Council said neither had been consulted. A spokesperson for the Department of Education said " Schools carry out consultations regularly on a variety of issues and we believe they are experts on how best to consult and communicate with parents and the wider community" This simply has not happened. Questions put to the Interim Executive Board, Regional Schools Commissioner and the Department of Education have still remained unanswered. How can we trust a trust where accountability will no longer be guaranteed? Staff are being bullied into submission and now we have already lost several of our qualified teachers who were the heart of the school. If this is the treatment of the staff what on earth is in store for our children? Aspirations Ethos appears to have a focus on narrow academic achievement as seen in the recent Budmouth student contract, lifted from the one used at Magna Academy. Exclusions at Aspirations nearby Atlantic Academy run at 0.3%, 3 times the national average of 0.1%. Lord Agnew states this figure in his recent letter to Children's Services. This alongside Aspirations punitive regime, including isolations for minor infringements, is a major concern, especially in an area of social and economic deprivation. When questioned on the details of the new behaviour contract for students at the college David Herbert pleaded that it had been sent out in error and that it was a " mistake". Rather a large mistake for a school to be making and the belief is that they were hoping it would fly! We have data and many comments from people about why this choice is wrong. The feedback we have received has also shown support across all political parties. George Orwell wrote this in his book 1984. " The party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears, it was their final, most essential command". We urge you to continue to show your support, to listen to us and make further determined representations to the Secretary of State regards the choice of sponsor, due diligence process and to pause the conversion. "

Statement 3 – Professor Philip Marfleet

Economic and Social Crisis in Weymouth and Portland

“Thank you Chair and Councillors,

Three minutes – so three short points directed to Item 13 on your agenda – the alarming situation in Weymouth and Portland.

First, there’s a profound economic and social crisis in the area - the main urban area covered by Dorset Council, with some 70,000 people - more than a fifth of the population for the county authority.

W&P’s problems aren’t unique but the cluster of issues is very unusual. Official figures show that W&P:

- has the lowest average weekly wage in the UK;
- that a quarter of all jobs pay less than the Living Wage, of which more than half are part-time;
- that housing costs are rising and, that while average wages are the lowest, Council Tax is the highest in England.

Recent figures show that child poverty has reached alarming levels – in Portland it’s over 40 per cent. And child obesity is the highest in the whole of the South-West – meaning major problems – and costs – as these children become adults.

Perhaps most telling is the measure of social mobility: South Dorset is 533rd of 533 parliamentary constituencies in England for social mobility ... and W&P performs even worse, falling off the bottom of this crucial index ... crucial because it measures the life chances of our children.

It’s this, in the words of a former senior executive of the Council, that’s “Dorset’s Shame”.

Some of these problems are evident elsewhere in the county – notably in the case of rural poverty – but in W&P they’re all present as part of a syndrome of general decline.

Second point - is the issue of responsibility. Community organisations like my own – WeyPAW – have been raising these issues for several years. Many thanks to the cross-party group of councillors who’ve worked with us; at the same, some elected officials have chosen to ignore these compelling facts.

Councils can make a difference – by systematically collecting evidence, listening to local people and taking policy decisions that may not be expensive but can have a long-term impact.

Third is the issue of resources. When you reach Item 13 please note that it asks only for human resources. It proposes a special team to focus on poverty and social mobility in the county with an emphasis on W&P – to get under way as soon as possible, and to report back to a Full Council with recommendations.

This will involve primarily the time of some councillors and officers – it will be time well spent.

Finally, an invitation: you'll see these notices of a conference to be held at the end of September. We have excellent speakers – national experts on poverty, families and well-being, together with local people who've risen to the challenge of protecting our services for the community. This is part of our contribution to assist the Council in its work.

Please do attend: we hope you'll also find the discussion informative - and we look forward to benefiting from your experience and guidance. Thank you."

Statement 4 – Craig Martin – UNISON

Budmouth Academisation

On behalf of the Dorset Branch of UNISON who is the Trade Union for the Support staff at Budmouth college we write to you in support of the motion proposed by Cllr Hope and seconded by Cllr Taylor. You have a pivotal role and responsibility in determining whether the college succeeds as a community asset or is subsumed in a Trust which as a trade union, we cannot endorse. It is important for the Council to note that this is the first time that support staff and teaching staff Trade Unions have joined in partnership with the parents and community as a whole to voice such strong concerns and opposition to the Forced Academisation of one of our Dorset's Schools.

UNISON has a recognition agreement with Aspirations Academy Trust at national level, however our experience of Aspirations in south west is one of concern both for the welfare of staff and pupils. It is our opinion and in all good faith that this forced Academisation would be to the ultimate cost to the education of all the current and future students and the community which Budmouth serves.

We would like it formally put on record that as a Trade Union of [5000](#) strong in Dorset we fully support the letter sent to the Rt Hon Damian Hinds by the Executive Director of People -Children and she has the full support and confidence of UNISON, and we have also written to the Rt Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP with concerns and voiced our opposition to this decision.

The College has had the issue over the years that is associated with being a Foundation School, maintained and semiautonomous but without the close support of the Local Authority. This has left the school in some financial

difficulties which are not the fault of the students. We believe the new head teacher Mr Herbert, with whom UNISON has been working over the last few weeks, has indeed the skills and ability to turn the school around quickly and efficiently with the support of the Local Authority and he has our support.

UNISON has voiced concerns with regards to the choice of the IEB and the way that the original restructure of support staff was undertaken. We accept this has now been withdrawn for now, but our deep concerns are still present, especially with regards to the perception of Aspirations' involvement during this time as a senior member of the Trust was present at the consultation meeting for the support staff restructure long before any TUPE consultations had taken place.

We note at this time, the request which came to Cabinet with regards to the £600K restructure cost came from AAT as stated in the cabinet papers, again this in our view is highly inappropriate as they were not and are still not the employer.

In our experience, Aspirations has a record of off rolling students and cutting non statutory provisions. Aspirations make much of the latest Outstanding Ofsted inspection of Magna Academy in Poole, however they are less open about the caveat that was added to this inspection that the school has a much higher pupil movement than expected in such a school. We have seen the closure of the non statutory nursery provision at the Atlantic Academy on Portland which UNISON fought on behalf of its members affected. Despite strong opposition from the community, parents, local political pressure and representation from staff and their Trade Unions, this decision was still carried and will be to the detriment of the community on Portland.

We urge you to accept and act on this motion as a matter of urgency and do everything in your power to halt this process. UNISON's position is clear, we are against the privatisation of children's education via Academisation and note that when schools become Academies, it is the Local Authority that pays the bill, leaving private companies to make profit from public services. I hope that you agree with us in saying that in this situation any money the Council has to spend on Budmouth should be an investment in our children's futures and not as a financial penalty to facilitate a course of action which will be detrimental to the community.

Please support this motion.

Statement 5 – Carolyn Emmett

Bus Service

The buses between Bridport and Yeovil have been in disarray for some time now, increasing rural isolation and having a seriously negative effect on local people's ability to get to work, school and college.

Today I would like to focus on one story among many of those affected by this. It is my daughter's plight, who is in year 10 at Colfox School, and I am using her as a representative of a number of other children who go to the same school. We live in Beaminster, and Colfox School is a 10 minute bus ride away on the Beaminster edge of Bridport. When she started there 4 years ago, there was a bus that would get her there in the mornings, and a bus that would get her back home again.

I would like to stress here that these weren't school buses. They were public buses that we paid for (along with other families), and which other people were using for work, shopping, etc.

Why did she not go to Beaminster School, I hear you ask? Well that is her catchment school. But sometimes kids get bullied; sometimes they have medical problems that are being dealt with better at one school than another. In the case of my daughter, she has High Functioning Autistic Spectrum Disorder (or Aspergers), and for a number of reasons she just felt a lot happier going to Colfox School. She doesn't have a statement, or sufficient backing to get her a taxi to school. That sort of support is very hard to come by, in these days of school cutbacks.

I know that there are many children, not in the Beaminster catchment, who go there instead of their local school, for similar reasons. One size doesn't fit all, and there are times where flexibility is needed. In fact if you live in Bridport, a public bus can take you to Beaminster, Woodroffe (in Lyme Regis) or Thomas Hardye (in Dorchester), which are all out of the catchment area. It's therefore incredibly unfair that now in Beaminster you can only get to the catchment school.

The bus that was getting kids home from Colfox to Beaminster and further North, was stopped by Dorset County Council in October last year. They gave only a week's notice over half term, leaving many kids stranded. The only reason many people knew this was happening was because a local resident, Sheena, told them. Around 30 kids were affected in total, with an average of 6 kids catching the bus every day. Since then, we have all been getting by with a combination of lifts, waiting for 2 hours for the next bus, or leaving school early to get the 6th form link bus back to Beaminster. This last option is only for year 10 and 11 students, and means missing 1 ¼ hours of school per week. Some kids have had

to change schools. I have two other children and co-ordinating the transport of them all has now become a nightmare. Incidentally my eldest has just finished at Yeovil College (the transport to there has also been hugely affected by the Bridport to Yeovil bus fiasco), and my youngest is in fact at Beaminster School.

Statement 6 – Paul Snow

Social Mobility

May I commend the Council for preparing the State of Dorset Report 2019, published in May. I moved to Portland some 10 years ago and have long felt that the Island suffers from deprivation and under investment. Back in 2017 the Office for National Statistics confirmed that Weymouth & Portland had the lowest average weekly wage in England, £25 per week lower than the next lowest. In the same year the people of Weymouth & Portland were in the top 1% highest council tax payers in the country out of more than 9000 cities, towns & parishes.

The State of Dorset 2019 Report confirms that Weymouth & Portland are no strangers to deprivation. The Report states that 10 areas, out of 219 in Dorset, are within the top 20% most deprived areas in the country, 9 of these are within the former Borough of Weymouth & Portland. 7 neighbourhoods in Dorset fall into the top 20% nationally for income deprivation, all 7 can be found in Weymouth & Portland.

This social & economic deprivation has far reaching consequences. It means that a woman living in the most deprived areas of Weymouth or Portland can expect to die 5.2 years earlier than a woman in one of the least deprived areas of the county.

The election of the new Unitary County Council ushered in a new era. I hope that you, the members of this brave new Dorset Council, regardless of any party affiliation, can support Agenda item 13 and help guide the poorest areas of our county into a safer and brighter future.

Statement 7 – Bernard Sullivan

Dorset 80 Years On Presentation to Dorset Council

Introduction

Madam Chair and Councillors,

As members of Safe Passage (Dorset) we would first like to thank Councillor Val Potheary for proposing this motion before you in memory of the magnificent

effort by the people of Britain 80 years ago that became known as the Kinder Transport.

We also want to thank our former councils for the great work they have done, and that you are continuing to do to resettle some of the most vulnerable refugees in our county, and we praise the dedication of your staff working both for the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Supported Lodgings scheme and the Foster Care departments with whom some of us are already working closely. We understand the huge efforts they put in every day. And we know they do this because they really care.

We are here today to ask you as a council to do something really special for unaccompanied and vulnerable refugee children, but in doing so we would like to emphasise two points.

1. Safe Passage are acutely aware of the funding shortfalls experienced by local authorities who implement the existing refugee resettlement schemes. For that reason, the 1170 pledges that Safe Passage have already obtained from local authorities across the country depend on them being supported by a 100% government-funded plan which we are seeking. If it should prove impossible to obtain that funding, those pledges would be automatically invalidated.
2. Secondly, what we are asking you today to commit to a great humanitarian action. It is not a political issue and even less so is it a party political issue.

So, who are we?

Our Safe Passage (Dorset) deputation consists of people who represent diverse communities across Dorset who really understand the terrible situations in which refugees find themselves.

Some of us have been assisting refugees across Europe and beyond for up to 20 years - collecting, transporting, and personally distributing hundreds of tons and many millions of pounds worth of humanitarian aid. - to Kosovan refugees in bandit-threatened Northern Albania, to Croatian and Kosovan Serb refugees in Serbia, to Roma refugees in camps in Montenegro, and to the huge overcrowded camps in Greece and its islands which house thousands of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, and Somalia, in truly terrible conditions, and to both Yazidi and Muslim refugees from Iraq.

Some of us, from the towns of Sherborne, Gillingham, Blandford Forum, Weymouth, Shaftesbury and elsewhere are actively supporting resettled vulnerable refugee families living among us in Dorset.

One of our team is a former UK ambassador who is using his Arabic language skills and his great experience of Syria to actively assist refugee families in the county to become established in our society.

We have a representative of refugee foster carers in Dorset, and landlords who are providing accommodation for vulnerable refugee families. One of our team is himself a refugee who has been settled here.

And we have a survivor from the Nazi holocaust who only survived because he was hidden as a child in Belgium throughout the war.

In the public gallery, we have local representatives from all our main religious groups, refugee support groups, and many caring individuals, all of whom have come to demonstrate their strength and commitment as humanitarians to supporting refugees in Dorset. Faith leaders and support groups have joined forces to write collective letters to all of you, showing their solidarity for humanity that transcend all other divides.

We are all here, not just to demonstrate the depth and breadth of support for this campaign across Dorset, but to act as witnesses as to how you as a council respond and demonstrate your own humanity for refugees.

So why today?

80 years ago, at a time of great economic crisis, and in just 10 months, 10,000 mostly Jewish children were brought to Britain from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, saving them from Nazi persecution. That wonderful humanitarian initiative by the British people, following the terrifying events of Krystallnacht, undoubtedly saved a great many children's lives. Children that have gone on to become Nobel Prize winners, representatives in the House of Lords, British film directors, and our teachers and doctors. Some were brought to live here in Dorset.

The threat to children fleeing war and oppression is now at the highest level it has been in the last 70 years. We are witnessing the biggest humanitarian crisis since the second world war, with over 70 million displaced worldwide by war, persecution and conflict. 25 million of these are refugees and more than 50% are children under 18yrs old. We have to ask ourselves "what if one was our child?" It is up to us, both individually and collectively, to do everything in our power to measure up to the challenges that this presents, and follow our proud British tradition for accepting refugees, and saving children's lives.

So what precisely are we asking this council to do?

As you will know, the government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme were due to end in 2020 and although the Home Sec has just promised to extend and amalgamate some schemes for a further year, it is not clear if children will be specifically included or whether this would include any of those within Europe. Furthermore, if we leave the EU on Oct 31st without a deal, Dublin III arrangement under which children in EU countries with family members in the UK can apply for asylum here will automatically end, increasing the pressure for them to take extreme risks to reach their family.

Therefore, Lord Dubs and we at Safe Passage are calling upon every local authority across the country to undertake something very simple – to commit to accepting “a minimum of 3 unaccompanied or vulnerable children per year every year for the next 10 years”. Across the country, this would equate to the 10,000 child refugees brought here 80 years ago.

Safe Passage are committed to Safe and Legal routes for child refugees, so not only would these children be properly authenticated by agencies such as UNHCR working with the UK Home Office, but they would arrive by a SAFE and LEGAL ROUTE, not as spontaneous arrivals having taken immense risks in flimsy dinghies, or under or inside lorries. Furthermore, their care would be ensured through a fully government funded scheme, and therefore neither deplete already stretched council funds, nor be an ongoing burden on local taxation.

You will have heard that when we brought this initiative to our outgoing Dorset County Council on 8th November, they were unanimous in providing their strongest possible support to our campaign to carry forward to Dorset Council at the earliest possible opportunity.

So today, we stand before you to ask you as a council to make a pledge to accept a **“minimum of just 3 unaccompanied or vulnerable children each year for the next 10 years”** in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport and to show that we in Dorset are committed to play our part in this great undertaking to save the lives of 10,000 children.

How will we support you as our council?

We are committed to use our own refugee support and faith-based networks to work with you to encourage more people to enquire about becoming foster carers, to consider offering supported lodgings, and for humanitarian landlords to offer rented accommodation to assist with the placement of refugee families.

Full Council – 18 July 2019

Questions from Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Alex Brenton

Town and Parish Councils

“The Dorset Council is a new sort of Council for Dorset, the purpose was to streamline local government. Parish and Town Councils have a proud history of centuries of effective government.

There has been concern that communication between the two tiers has not been effective lately, with confusion and lack of knowledge in Dorset Council about the valued and effective roles of Town Councils and Clerks.

What steps is the Dorset Council putting in place so as to improve this?

Suggestions from some Town and Parish Clerks include :-

Making a particular portal on the Dorset website for access by Town & Parish clerks.

Having a dedicated communication team for local councils,

More training for Switchboard and Reception staff about the many valued roles of Parish & Town Clerks.

Has the Leader of the Council any plans to improve the situation? “

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

“I have addressed the importance of this council’s relationship with parish and town council’s in my announcements as Leader, earlier in this meeting. I hope that the formation of an Executive Advisory Panel, Chaired by Cllr Tony Alford, will reassure Cllr Brenton that as Leader I am committed to working with parish and town councils.”

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Local Area Forums/Community Network Groups

There was always when re-organising to a Unitary Authority, an aspiration to form Local Area Forums or Local Community Network Groups where DC Cllrs in adjoining Wards would keep a local focus and connection by meeting with local stakeholders: This could be a selection of local businesses, community voluntary groups and trusts, Youth groups, Town & Parish Councillors and environment groups to discuss, debate and be hands on the local communities on issues, growth and projects in that area. I envisage this would involve Officer support and a small budget for Community Projects.

Has this been discussed by the Leader and Cabinet and if not, why not? And if so in what form would this engagement take and when will it be implemented?

E.g. The Cornwall & Wiltshire Unitary Councils' are both approaches that work well.

Thank you for your consideration in this important community engagement

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

See response to that given to Alex Brenton.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Kate Wheller

Budmouth College

“At a recent Full Council meeting of Weymouth Town Council a Notice of Motion regarding the formation of Academies was debated. A Notice of Motion on the academisation of Budmouth is to be tabled at the next Full Dorset Council meeting.

I do not want to rehearse that NOM which has departed somewhat from the original.

I understand that the subject of Academies is complex and the scope for us as a local authority is limited however I request that this council looks at how it can better support those schools being threatened with academisation.

The education of our children is our future not just of Weymouth but of our whole County. Whilst of course I care about Budmouth and am particularly concerned by the MAT that is proposed to take it over my concern is much wider.

The goal posts have been moved in assessing the performance of our schools with a clear intention of opening the door to academisation. I have spoken to many parents, teachers and ancillary staff about their experiences working within an Academy, none have reported good things. I am asking you to make a determined effort to give our schools in Dorset all the support they need to resist the march of academisation. Teachers, parents and children are unhappy with Academies, our local schools should be run for the benefit of our local children and our local communities not for some faceless, arms length profit machine. We had excellent local authority schools across Dorset, we still have many, why not all?

You have shown great strength in the debate on Budmouth already I ask you now, to maintain that strength, join councils across the country who are resisting academisation. “

Response by Cllr A Parry

“The sports centre is part of the school premises and is owned by the Governing Body of Budmouth School. The Governing Body is required to transfer the school premises to the Academy Trust on conversion; under the Academy Act 2010 and in accordance with the Secretary of State's Academy Order. As the

Council is not the owner of the school premises it will not be a party to the transfer.

The playing field land at Budmouth School also forms part of the school premises and is owned by the Governing Body. School playing fields are protected by legislation. Should the owner wish to make any transfer or change of use of the playing fields, they would be required to comply with legislation, which may include the need to obtain the Secretary of State's prior approval.

The conversion of Budmouth School has been ordered by the Secretary of State and in accordance with the Academies Act 2010 the Council has a duty to take all reasonable steps to facilitate the conversion of the school into an Academy”

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