

Public Document Pack



DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2020

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

Apologies: Cllrs Tony Alford and Andy Canning

Due to technical difficulties Cllrs Janet Dover, Beryl Ezzard and Julie Robinson were unable to take part in the meeting.

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

Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Corporate Director - Adult Care Operations), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Manager), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. Election of Chairman

Pauline Batstone, the previous Chairman, stated that it had been a privilege to represent Dorset as Chairman of the Council over the last year.

It was proposed by Cllr P Batstone and seconded by Cllr T Coombs that Cllr V Potheary be elected Chairman of the Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

It was proposed by Cllr P Kimber that he be elected Chairman of the Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021. This was not supported.

Decision

That Cllr V Potheary be elected Chairman of the Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

Cllr Potheary then made and signed her declaration of office. She thanked Cllr Batstone for her hard work and dedication over the last 16 months. She also thanked her proposer and seconder and members of the Council for her election and would promote Dorset, and support Dorset businesses and communities as much as she could.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by Cllr V Potheary and seconded by Cllr R Bryan that Cllr M Parkes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Dorset Council for the period until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Brenton that Cllr H Legg be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Dorset Council for the period until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

Upon being put to the vote Cllr M Parkes was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Decision

That Cllr M Parkes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Dorset Council for the period until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2021.

Cllr M Parkes made and signed his declaration of office and thanked his proposer and seconder and Dorset Councillors for the confidence they had shown in appointing him.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Alford and Andy Canning.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 February and 11 June 2020 were confirmed. The Chairman would sign the minutes at the earliest opportunity.

5. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

6. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported the recent death of Cllr A Thacker.

A pre-recorded message from Cllr T Alford was played in tribute to Cllr A Thacker and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect.

7. Election of Leader of Council

It was proposed by Cllr P Wharf and seconded by Cllr A Parry that Cllr S Flower be elected Leader of the Council for 2020/2021.

There were no other nominations.

Decision

That Cllr S Flower be elected Leader of the Council for 2020/2021.

Cllr S Flower thanked Councillors for their support and looked forward to a constructive and productive year.

8. Appointment of Deputy Leader of Council, Cabinet/Portfolio Holders and Lead members

The Leader of the Council reported the appointment of the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and Lead Members as follows:-

Spencer Flower	Leader/ Governance, Performance and Communication
Peter Wharf	Deputy Leader/Corporate Development and Change
Gary Suttle	Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Ray Bryan	Highways, Travel and Environment
Tony Ferrari	Economic Growth, Assets and Property
David Walsh	Planning
Jill Haynes	Customer and Community Services
Andrew Parry	Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Laura Miller	Adult Social Care and Health
Graham Carr-Jones	Housing and Community Safety
Byron Quayle	Lead Member for Education
Jane Somper	Lead Member for Safeguarding
Piers Brown	Lead Member for Health
Simon Gibson	Lead Member for Care
Noc Lacey-Clarke	Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours
Cherry Brooks	Lead member for Highways

9. Leader's Announcements

The Leader reported that the next Leader's Bulletin would be available on 15 October 2020. He added that although the Covid-19 pandemic was a challenging time for the Council, it had provided opportunities to show how adaptable the Council had been for greater working with partners and communities.

10. **Public Participation - Questions and Statements**

Public questions, statements and the responses from Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder are set out in Appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

11. **Public participation - petitions and deputations**

There were no petitions or deputations.

12. **Questions from Councillors**

Cllr A Brenton asked questions of the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help and Planning.

Cllr M Roe, Cllr N Ireland and Cllr B Ezzard asked questions of the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services.

Cllr N Ireland asked questions of the Portfolio Holder for Planning.

Cllr R Legg asked questions of Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy and the Leader of the Council.

Cllr B Ezzard asked questions of the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment.

The questions and responses are attached to these minutes at Appendix 2.

13. **Appointments to Committees, Joint Committees and Appointment of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen**

The Council considered a report on the appointment to Committees, Joint Committees and the election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for 2020/21.

The nominations to committees from the Political Group Leaders had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by Cllr S Flower and seconded by Cllr P Wharf that the three recommendations be approved.

In respect of recommendation 3, it was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr K Wheller that this be amended to give delegated authority to the Harbour Committee members to appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at their first meeting following the meeting of Annual Council..

This amendment was debated with various points raised. Some members thought the amendment went against the Council's constitution; that the Council had the statutory responsibility for Harbours and the appointments should sit with it; and the amendment would allow Council members to be overruled by the independent members on the Committee. Other members thought independent members of this Committee should have the opportunity

to appoint the Chairman and Vice-Chairman as they were an integral part of Committee.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

Upon being put to the vote, the original proposal was agreed.

Decisions

- (i) That the allocation of committee seats and the appointments to committees and joint committees, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2020/21.
- (ii) That delegated authority be given to Political Group Leaders to make in-year changes to committee appointments.
- ii) That the nominations for committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for 2020-21 be approved.

14. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - Dorset Scheme of Members' Allowances

The Council considered a report by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) on the Dorset Council Scheme of Members' Allowances.

The Leader reminded members that the original scheme had been approved by the Shadow Council in February 2019 and was to be reviewed after a year. Since then the outcomes of a governance review had been agreed by Council on 18 February 2020 and these arrangements were taken into account within the report. The costs of the increases in allowances were a reduction when compared to the costs of the previous councils' allowances schemes. The IRP were satisfied that the role of lead members involved additional work and responsibility similar to those of a chairman. The additional capacity they would provide would help bring about the transformation necessary to maintain a balanced budget. The new scheme would also enable people of all ages and social backgrounds to be involved in local democracy. He thanked the IRP for their evidence-based report.

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower and seconded by Cllr P Wharf that recommendation (i) be taken separately and recommendations 1(ii) to (vi) en bloc. The Leader of the Council requested that both items be a recorded vote. This was supported by Cllr P Wharf, Cllr N Lacey-Clarke and Cllr N Ireland.

Cllr N Ireland proposed the following amendment

“That members reject the IRP recommended increase to the basic allowance”. This was seconded by Cllr N Lacey-Clarke.

In the debate that followed some members were of the view that members' allowances should not be increased because of the financial difficulties and

hardship faced by residents and the Council arising from the Covid-19 pandemic and that the increase was more than staff salary increases. Other members suggested that members could choose not to accept the additional allowance and give it to charity and highlighted the need to be able to attract a more diverse range of members.

On being put to the vote the amendment was carried.

Those voting in favour of the amendment:-

Cllrs J Andrews, P Batstone, P Barrow, R Biggs, D Bolwell, A Brenton, C Brooks, P Brown, R Bryan, G Carr-Jones, K Clayton, S Cocking, T Cook, R Cook, S Christopher, M Dyer, T Ferrari, S Flower, L Fry, D Gray, S Gibson, P Harrison, J Haynes, M Hall, B Heatley, R Holloway, R Hope, N Ireland, S Jespersen, C Jones, S Jones, A Kerby, R Knox, N Lacey-Clarke, H Legg, R Legg, C Lugg, D Morgan, L Miller, L O'Leary, J Orrell, E Parker, M Parkes, B Quayle, M Rennie, M Roberts, M Roe, D Shortell, A Starr, G Suttle, J Somper, C Sutton, R Tarr, D Taylor, G Taylor, D Tooke, W Trite, D Turner, P Wharf, K Wheller, S Williams,

Those voting against the amendment:

Cllrs R Adkins, M Barron, S Bartlett, T Coombs, B Goringe, R Hughes, P Kimber, A Parry, M Penfold, B Ridout, D Walsh and J Worth

Abstentions:

Cllr B Pipe and V Potheary

Cllr C Sutton proposed that recommendations (ii) and (iii) should be deleted and this was seconded by Cllr K Clayton. However the Monitoring Officer advised that as set out in Rule 17.6, an amendment was not valid if it was to negate the motion. He further advised that if members opposed recommendations (ii) and (iii) they should simply vote against them rather than seek an amendment.

During the debate a number of differing views were expressed. These included; that providing a special responsibility allowance (SRA) for this role was inconsistent with the above decision; that there were 76 other councillors who could provide support and who had experience and abilities which could be used at no cost; that the money would be better spend on supporting children and young families; and that this was insensitive when residents had been made redundant, were on furlough and facing unemployment and financial hardship.

Those in support of the SRA stated: it would enable younger people to take part in democracy; it would mean that members were paid and recognised for the work to be undertaken; it would compensate for any loss of income; members did not have to accept an SRA; the new roles would play a part in creating new ideas, strategies and policies and strengthen the member-led Council; and it would provide the means for younger members to be able to play a greater role in supporting Portfolio Holders.

Note: the Chairman lost internet connection at this point and the Vice-Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the item.

Following the debate the Vice-Chairman (in the Chair) asked that the vote in respect of recommendation (ii) and (iii) be put.

Those voting in favour of Recommendations (ii) and (iii)

Cllrs R Adkins, J Andrews, P Batstone, R Biggs, C Brooks, P Brown, R Bryan, G Carr-Jones, R Cook, T Coombs, J Dunseith, M Dyer, T Ferrari, S Flower, L Fry, S Gibson, B Goringe, P Harrison, J Haynes, S Jespersen, C Jones, A Kerby, N Lacey-Clarke, C Lugg, R Knox, L Miller, L O'Leary, E Parker, M Parkes, A Parry, M Penfold, B Pipe, V Potheary, B Quayle, B Ridout, M Roberts, D Shortell, J Somper, G Suttle, W Trite, D Turner, D Walsh, P Wharf, K Wheller.

Those voting against Recommendations (ii) and (iii)

Cllrs M Barron, P Barrow, D Bolwell, A Brenton, K Clayton, S Cocking, T Cook, D Gray, B Heatley, R Holloway, R Hope, N Ireland, S Jones, P Kimber, H Legg, R Legg, D Morgan, J Orrell, M Rennie, M Roe, A Starr, C Sutton, D Taylor, G Taylor, R Tarr, D Tooke, S Williams, J Worth.

Abstentions:

Cllrs S Bartlett, S Christopher, M Hall.

Cllr S Flower proposed and Cllr P Wharf seconded that recommendations (iv), (v) and (vi) be taken en bloc.

On being put to the vote Recommendations (iv), (v) and (vi) were approved.

Decision

- (i) That members reject the IRP recommended increase to the basic allowance;
- (ii) That a new special responsibility allowance be awarded for Lead Members
- (iii) That the special responsibility allowance for Lead Members be set at £10,000 per annum;
- (iv) That special responsibility allowances be awarded to the chairs of the Scrutiny Committees of £10,000 per annum;
- (v) That special responsibility allowances be awarded to the chairs of the Overview Committees of £10,000 per annum; and
- (vi) That the special responsibility allowance for school appeal members be discontinued.

Reason for Decisions

To enable Full Council to consider recommendations on the scheme of allowances following a review undertaken by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

DURATION OF THE MEETING

As the meeting had not concluded within three hours, it was proposed by Cllr S Flower and seconded by Cllr N Ireland to continue the meeting but to finish no later than 10.00pm.

15. Fundamental Review of Outside Bodies

Vice-Chairman in the Chair

The Council considered a report on the Fundamental Review of Outside Bodies.

Cllr L Fry, Chairman of the Task and Finish Group who undertook the review, presented the Groups findings. It was proposed by Cllr L Fry and seconded by Cllr S Williams that the recommendations be approved.

The Group were thanked for the work undertaken in order to provide a sound basis for any future review. It was noted that some of the bodies included were no longer relevant and these would be addressed through any future review. The Group had been a good example of cross-party working.

Decisions

- (i) That the list of Outside Bodies appended to the report be approved subject to any in year amendments being made by the Democratic Services Team in consultation with the Chairman of the Panel, Cllr Les Fry, and Political Group Leaders.
- (ii) That the Outside Body Task and Finish Group reviews the list of Outside Bodies in 2021 to take into account any changes and to review how well the revised list is operating.
- (iii) That the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group works with officers to find an appropriate mechanism to enable members to upload updates on outside Bodies to the Dorset Council intranet pages.

16. Amendments to the 2020-21 Calendar of Meetings

The Chairman returned to the meeting and took the Chair

The Leader explained that the calendar of meetings had been amended to reflect the new governance structure. It was proposed by Cllr S Flower and seconded by Cllr B Pipe that the recommendations be approved.

Decision

- (i) That the amendments to the Calendar of Meetings for the period September 2020 to May 2021 be approved.
- (ii) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director - Legal and Democratic Services to make any necessary changes, in consultation with the relevant Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, to ensure effective political management.

17. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

18. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Public Participation - Appendix 1
Questions from Councillors - Appendix 2

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.42 pm

Chairman

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

Full Council – 3 September 2020 Questions from the Public

Question 1 – submitted by Tony Walter

Getting to zero carbon: lobbying national government

On 15 July, Dorset Council published its long-awaited Draft Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Strategy, now passed for public consultation by Place Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. One of the most striking things about this strategy from a council controlled by the same party as the UK government is its highlighting of *national* policies and regulations, a *national* lack of direction and low *national* standards, hampering local authorities from moving to zero carbon, including several policies/regulations/standards introduced in the last decade (p.17). Reforming this national framework is essential if the UK is to achieve the government's de-carbonisation commitments.

The Strategy (pp.27,30,48,49,55) promises to lobby government on the national policies, regulations and standards that undermine its climate & ecological ambitions in 5 of the Strategy's 8 areas for action:

Renewable energy (p.26)

- Uncertainty at national level re strategy & direction
- National grid limits deployment of renewable energy at scale
- Current policy framework does not support the move to low carbon
- The planning system does not actively encourage renewable energy

Buildings and assets (p.29)

- Lack of national strategy for heating
- Current & potential *Future Homes* standards for new builds not high enough to deliver national carbon-reduction targets
- Lack of legal requirement to retrofit buildings

The economy (p.35)

- Low carbon & renewable energy economy growing only slowly & adversely affected by recent changes in legislation and incentives
- Government introduced Additional Business Rates Levy penalising businesses that install renewable energy on their premises
- Circular economy heavily influenced by national policy & regulation

Water (p.41)

- Government limits councils' power to enforce water conservation in new developments

Transport (p.47)

- Lack of national direction and policy

Question: How does Dorset Council propose to lobby government effectively?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Thank you very much for your question, this is a really important issue which has been highlighted in our Climate Emergency Action plan and Strategy. Many of the actions required in Dorset are heavily reliant on an effective national policy framework and support to achieve our aspirations.

We will therefore be lobbying government in a number of ways to include:-

1. Cllr Ray Bryan, the chair of our climate change EAP and portfolio holder is a member of the Westminster Policy Group on Climate Change called the Conservative Environment Network working with policy makers which includes 80 Parliamentarians.
2. Lobbying national government through Dorset Council's membership of the Local Government Association and attending LGA Seminars. Meeting with Ministers with responsibility for achieving carbon neutral by 2050
3. Direct lobbying through our local Members of Parliament and National Political contacts across the UK.
4. Lobbying ministers for funding to support our plans and strategy.

Question 2 – submitted by Joe Burlington

Greta Thunberg(1) said "I've met many of the most powerful people in the world. And even among them, **pretty much everyone lacks even some of the most basic knowledge**" and, in *The Guardian*, Rebecca Willis (2) wrote "(One MP) said that **just a few of her 600 or so fellow parliamentarians took climate seriously** as an issue: 'You might not get into double figures'." The Council has acknowledged that there is 'a climate emergency and an ecological crisis' but its current policies will not deliver a sustainable future and it is clear that many politicians (and most voters) are unaware of dire threats to the future of our children.

Question:

What actions will Councillors take to educate themselves and the public about these matters?

To this end, I am willing to support councillors in person or by Zoom (or similar). I am a former physics teacher. I have been studying these matters intensively for 16 years.

(1) *Summer with Greta* (Chapter 8) "(P)eople understand much less about the climate crisis than you'd think ... **the level of knowledge and awareness is close to nonexistent.**" July

2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000kwcc>

(2) Rebecca Willis: 'In return for anonymity, MPs agreed to speak candidly with me about climate change. ... ' 21 May 2020

www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/may/21/i-dont-want-to-be-seen-as-a-zealot-what-mps-really-think-about-the-climate-crisis?utm_campaign=Carbon%20Brief%20Daily%20Briefing&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Revue%20newsletter

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

Thank you very much for your question. We have identified awareness raising and behaviour change as essential to achieving the aims of our Climate Emergency Strategy.

We will be developing a comprehensive communications strategy for our approach to the climate and ecological emergency. This strategy will draw upon a variety of media and approaches to deliver key messages. This will include:-

RAISING AWARENESS - through a range of channels, upgrading our climate change website, developing an online information hub for sharing information, and best practice, and providing information to residents through Council literature.

We will improve the awareness, engagement, and knowledge of our staff and service providers through staff awareness campaigns, organising targeted briefings and training sessions for officers, members, and decision makers and including information in staff induction training. We will also establish an internal climate change champion's programme.

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY ACTION

We will support & work closely with Town and Parish Councils and other organisations to signpost and communicate shared messages.

ENGAGEMENT WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

We will build support from stakeholders and the wider public by informing and educating on the benefits and opportunities of acting on climate change.

Question 3 – Submitted by Professor Philip Marfleet (on behalf of Dorset Says – Low Pay, No Way - Convenor, Weymouth and Portland Action on Wages (WeyPAW), and Jenny Lennon-Wood - Secretary, Dorset Trades Union Council

Real Living Wage for employees of Dorset Council

Question:

Dorset Council (DC) proposes increased payments to Council members and new paid roles for members of the majority party. Our Council appears to have ignored repeated recommendations to introduce the Real Living Wage for its employees and those working for its contractors. Dorset is a low-wage county: we need urgent action to address a crisis of poverty wages and declining social mobility. Why is DC directing funds to its senior members while thousands of Council workers and others struggle to make ends meet?

Statement:

Over a year ago, local organisations urged DC to tackle poverty incomes and declining social mobility:

- Declare its public commitment to meet legal requirements on the National Minimum Wage, Equal Pay for women, and terms and conditions of employment - and expect this of its contractors.
- Prepare to introduce the Real Living Wage (£9.30 an hour) and encourage others to follow suit.
- Take the lead in educating our young people about rights at work.

Our proposals were referred to the Executive Advisory Panel on Economic Growth, to which we gave a presentation in September 2019. Having heard nothing from the Panel, we raised questions at the Council's meeting in February 2020 and were informed that the issues would be considered during development of the Council's *Economic Growth Strategy (EGS)*. The Cabinet has apparently approved this Strategy without the benefit of democratic debate by Full Council. There are no proposals to introduce the Real Living Wage; meanwhile, senior Council members are to be appointed to new paid positions, increasing the annual cost of councillors' fees by over £100,000.

DC has undertaken a preliminary assessment of the implications of introducing the Real Living Wage - yet the *EGS* contains no evidence of practical measures to address the injustice of low pay. Almost a third of jobs in the Council's area pay less than the Real Living Wage: in Weymouth and Portland this rises to 48%, the second-worst record in the country (government figures).

Many of Dorset's low-paid jobs are in tourism and retail - among the sectors hardest hit by the COVID crisis. Termination of the government's Job Retention Scheme could have a devastating impact. HMRC recorded claims to furlough a

third of all eligible jobs in Dorset by the end of July - around 51,600 potential redundancies. Dorset is likely to be one of the areas worst affected by the COVID crisis – its low wages making many families vulnerable.

Cornwall shares many economic problems with Dorset. Its Council introduced the Real Living Wage for all employees in 2015. Why can't DC do the same?

DC should abandon plans to increase payments to councillors. Instead, let's work together to make Dorset a Living Wage County.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change

The Government sets the National Minimum Wage for employees up to the age of 24 and the National Living Wage for those who are 25 and older. The National Living Wages for 2020 is £8.72.

The majority of Dorset Council employees are on Green Book terms and conditions. The Green Book pay spine is subject to annual increases which are negotiated at a national level between the Local Government Association and trade unions. The lowest point on our current Green Book pay spine, effective from 1 April 2020 is £9.25.

The setting of Members Allowances is a different and separate matter. On our agenda this evening is the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council is required in law to establish a Panel and have regard to its recommendations.

This page is intentionally left blank

Full Council – 3 September 2020 Questions from Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Alex Brenton

A question for Cabinet member for Children's Services and Planning. 3.9.2020
The plans to build a new Children's Home at 45 Dorchester Road Weymouth is good news for the looked after children of Dorset.

I hope it is also good news for Dorset to prove it is fully committed to a Low Carbon future. The plans for 45 Dorchester Road we assume will include modern green building techniques. Such as using low carbon concrete, Ground source heat pump (GSHP) or air source heat pumps (GSHP) solar panels, rainwater storage and grey water usage system and all the other eco-friendly adaptations built in.

If we care about the future of our children Dorset Council should prove a leader in building for the future and be an example to the County developers that good modern design should last lifetimes.

Can the cabinet member confirm that low carbon building techniques will be used on all public buildings from now on?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

Dorset Council's statutory responsibility as the Local Planning Authority is separate from any role it has as a developer and it is important to maintain a distinction. The Local Planning Authority must consider all applications as submitted and on their merits, including those by or on behalf of Dorset Council, having regard to the local plan and any other material considerations.

Response from Children, Education, Skills and Early Help

The detail design and specification will be undertaken in line with aspirations contained within the Council's, Climate Emergency strategy, subject to existing budget constraints. The new build part of the project will use 'modern methods of construction' (MMC) – in effect a modular build using advanced sustainable principles and off-site construction reducing embedded carbon. We do intend to use a 'heat pump' and 'photovoltaic panels – indeed incorporating as much 'sustainable technology' as we can achieve within the budget and the procurement process before the project goes to contract.

All reasonable steps will be taken to reduce the carbon impact of future public buildings, however, this will need to be supported by Council policies and resources as we drive our estate towards zero carbon. Our Climate Emergency Strategy sets out our intention to develop these new zero carbon policies over the next year for further consideration by Cabinet.

Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Maria Roe

Tetra Pak is a food packaging used for dairy, beverages, soups, ice cream and other prepared food. One of the biggest benefits of Tetra Pak is that it is completely recyclable. Most Councils accept Tetra Pak with their kerbside collection. Aluminium foil and foil trays are also collected at the kerbside by 86% of councils according to Aluminium Insider (31/12/2015).

In Dorset this waste is either sent to landfill or people have to drive to a recycling centre or recycle bank to dispose of it which if you live in a village can be some distance. Why can't Dorset Council include this waste in its kerbside collection?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer & Community Services

Cartons are comprised of layers of different materials bonded together (plastic, card and in some cases foil). The process of separating the materials requires a specially designed process so they cannot be reprocessed with other paper and card. Foil is another material which required special sorting.

The council's contracted materials recycling facility is unable to separate cartons and foil from other materials for recycling, though technologies in sorting facilities are being developed.

Meanwhile the council maintains banks for cartons and foil in car parks and at the network of Household Recycling Centres.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Nick Ireland

Back on the 1st October 2019, I asked a question of Cabinet concerning the drastic reduction of service levels relating to bin collections and particularly recycling collections experienced by my constituents in the Crossways Ward and also in neighbouring areas. This stemmed from a shortage of serviceable vehicles combined with a chronic lack of qualified drivers.

Cllr Alford responded that *“There have been a number of vehicle breakdowns and issues with driver recruitment ... Upon investigation, we have concluded that Dorset Council currently pays the DWP's LGV drivers less than neighbouring authorities and comparable companies. Therefore, we are reviewing Dorset Council's pay rates for DWP drivers. Officers are working closely with HR colleagues to explore all options on pay and grading, including the option of a market supplement being applied to DWP driver posts.”*

I have followed this up numerous times since and the service hasn't improved; if anything it has got worse and I'm hearing the same from fellow members whose wards are served by the Wareham Depot.

I see no evidence that the vehicle situation has been resolved and have yet to be informed that we are now competitive in our offer to LGV drivers.

Seemingly nothing has been achieved since the issue was raised; why hasn't this been sorted and who's taking responsibility to ensure it is?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer & Community Services

The review of the drivers pay across Dorset Council waste services has now been completed and local market increments have been applied to all driver roles, so drivers are now being actively recruited. Now that the depot refurbishment has been completed at Wareham, in the short term an additional vehicle has been hired to assist. Mike Moon Head of Waste Operations will continue to work closely with the Area Operations Manager and the Service Manager for Fleet in this area.

Question 4 from Cllr Nick Ireland

The proposed development of Dorset County Hospital is extremely important not just to those patients local to Dorchester but also to patients further afield who choose our local hospital to meet their health needs. With the likely merger of the Poole and Royal Bournemouth & Christchurch Trusts, combined with the changes proposed under the Clinical Services Review, we are seeing a migration of services away from Poole to the more distant Bournemouth campus and a likely increase in the demands on DCH as the treatment centre of choice.

The planning application was submitted back in October 2019 and has since been deferred three times from the Northern Area Planning Committee by Dorset Council.

The £65m funding allocated for these improvements has to be applied for and there is a real danger that further delays in considering the planning application could impact upon the central government set deadline of December for the submission of the business case and the subsequent loss of some or potentially all of the funding.

Can the portfolio holder explain in detail the reasons for the delays in considering DCH's planning application and give assurance that it will be considered before the December deadline?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

This is a current application and so the following response is given without prejudice to any decision which the Local Planning Authority may make.

Officers are aware of the masterplan for DCH and the hospital's position on the importance of the current application. There have been ongoing negotiations between applicant and the planning authority to resolve matters outstanding between the parties which the applicant was made aware of in pre-application advice, and the case officer has been liaising closely with the applicant over timescales. Most recently, the application was intended for presentation to the Northern Area Committee at its scheduled meeting of 18th August, a meeting that was subsequently cancelled.

The officer's report is being finalised and the application will be considered at the next available committee meeting, which is scheduled to take place on 15th September.

Question 5 from Cllr Robin Legg

It looks inevitable that a sum of nearly £21.8M will need to be returned to the Treasury as the unallocated portion of funding made available by Government for Small Business Grants and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants during the Covid Crisis. Whilst acknowledging the efforts made by many authorities and MPs to get 5% of the original funds useable on a discretionary and more flexible basis it is now clear that 5% was not enough. What work is this authority presently doing to engage with Dorset's Members of Parliament so that they can lobby on our behalf for a large part of that £21.8M to be used where it is desperately needed to support local business?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy

My thanks to Cllr Legg for the question.

The sum in question is based on the receipt from govt of £134m however dorset council calculated that in fact we had a requirement for £120m as yet govt has not quantified why the additional money was sent over. As yet govt have not given us the method to calculate the final position. I would also like to stress that this is a national scheme and whilst we have been in a positive position there are councils that have found themselves in a negative position, it may be that the final reckoning allows any surplus in one area to fund the shortfall in others. It was always going to be the case that an underspend would occur as some larger organisations, restricted by state aid rules, tend to claim in the areas where their head offices are based.

Thanks to council leaders and MP's and national lobbying a discretionary grant scheme was allowed and calculated as 5% of the actual total grant funding for the area, therefore the 5% was as a calculation of the £120m and not the £134m in our case it amounted to just in excess of £6m.

The council has provided numerous reminders via a variety of means to those who did not claim the original small business grant or the retail hospitality and leisure grant, but we are not in a position of forcing people to accept the money and there are those who decided not to take up the funding and we must respect their views.

Cllr Legg makes a statement that additional funding is required due to a desperate need by local business and if that is the case we need to see the evidence that will assist us to lobby for additional support. During the early days of covid and the grant system, I was dealing with up to 45 phone calls a day and numerous emails from those who were as he describes desperate to obtain funding. In the last month or so this has dwindled to the odd email and call, certainly no more than 1 or 2 a week and I am able to direct them to suitable assistance where possible.

Any new scheme or assistance will need to be a national scheme as I am sure you are aware the cost of covid to Dorset has left us unable to consider any scheme that would give further stress on the budget other than that funded by central govt.

May I ask Cllr Legg to let me have the evidence that he has and i give him my assurance that I will follow it up.

Question 6 from Cllr Robin Legg

The appendix to the Independent Remuneration Panel report sets out a long list of things which the six new Lead Members might be called upon to do in support of Cabinet colleagues. At the present time, with so many suffering financial hardship as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, there is an even greater need to justify these posts and their associated costs. What therefore will be done to monitor the performance of those appointed so that at the end of twelve months a clear, transparent and public account is given of their work in relation to each of those elements in the appendix?

Response from the Leader of the Council

At Full Council on the 18 February members voted in favour of the recommendation from the Cross-Party Task and Finish Group to support the Governance Review, which included the appointment of up to six Lead Members

by the Leader of Council. So, the principle and purpose of Lead Members has the broad support of Members.

As previously mentioned at the Members Briefing on the proposed Governance Review at the end of January; the involvement of Lead Members is well proven and exists in many councils across the country, who operation an executive governance [Cabinet] arrangement. Can I refer you to the Constitution which sets out the detail the role of a Lead Member.

Later on the agenda I will announce who the Lead Members are and importantly their individual roles in support of some of the portfolio holders.

Also, on the agenda members will be asked to support the Independent Remuneration Panel recommendation, which included a Special Responsibility Allowance for Lead Members. The role of a Lead Member will be time consuming and like any role with additional responsibilities will be scrutinised on a routine basis to ensure the performance of the council does not undermine the delivery of the Council Plan or the Annual Revenue and Capital Budgets.

The Council does face massive challenges for the remainder of the term. Having the additional member capacity, in support of the Cabinet will be vital if we are to bring about the transformation necessary to maintain balanced budgets without the loss of services and to achieve the maximum benefits from unitary local government.

The importance of transparency in the way we as members carry out the business of this council cannot be overstated. However, this will of course apply to all aspects of the council rather than just one centring on Lead Members in particular, as has been suggested by Cllr Legg.

Question 7 from Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Issues with Dorset Waste Partnership Recyclates Collections. On behalf of my ward community, I wish to complain of the woeful lack of service, over a 6-week period (3 collections), when no collections were made, during the hottest spell of the summer. Having been in close contact with the Wareham Depot and defended the DWP Service many times stating to folk of the exemplary service that DWP staff have done throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, I was being told in July/August of Staff absences; sickness and holidays, plus truck breakdowns, in circumstances with no spare capacity or backup plan!. Why?

It is painfully obvious that the DWP Service is lacking in maintenance and adequately trained staff; with common knowledge that we lose HGV Drivers to neighbouring Councils as the Wages are better than DC's. This is and will cause continuing problems with keeping staff and particularly HGV Drivers? When, I ask, will this be addressed?

Also, when we encourage our communities to access the DC website, local folk find it unhelpful, not updated or gives inaccurate information, causing more issues. Usually then calling the local Members with complaint after complaint. Can we have an update on this too please?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer & Community Services

The review of the drivers pay across Dorset Council's waste services has now been completed and local market increments have been applied to all driver roles. There are currently two driver roles actively being recruited to in the Wareham depot to fill vacant posts, along with other driver roles across all depots. Now that the depot refurbishment has been completed, and the application to increase the numbers of LGV vehicles located at the Wareham depot being accepted, an additional hire vehicle has been located there to assist.

The waste pages on the Council's website are regularly reviewed and updated where necessary. Recent improvements to the online missed bin reporting form now provides residents with details of service disruptions that have affected their collections, along with details on when we will return to rectify the problem. In addition, Dorset Council's waste services are currently investing in in-cab technology that will allow for live collection information to be shared with residents through our online forms in the near future. For those residents who do not have access to the internet, particularly the elderly, there is always assistance on the Dorsetforyou helpline where operators will be able to access all the website information, report missed bins, and provide details of service disruptions.

Question 8 from Cllr Beryl Ezzard

Electricity Charging Points for Vehicles. Where and when is DC going to show the way by putting in Electric Charging Points on Car Parks? I know there has been some work done in encouraging buying electric vehicles, but we have to follow-on to make it easy for folk to re-charge their vehicles, within the Dorset Council area; there are very few at the present time.

When will DC be lobbying the Motor Manufacturers & Government? We need to bring them together to enable a universal charging system as now, most makes of vehicles have their own charging machines. This does make it difficult to decide if it is viable to choose a system that may go out of date within a few years! However, we must not be daunted by the fact that if we don't, we will be unable to achieve our Carbon Footprint and air pollution reduction significantly.

We are all conscious of our Climate Change & Ecological Emergency commitment, we need some action now! When, where and how many are Dorset Council prepared to install Electric Charging Points in the next year? Please give it this

some resource, as we need to demonstrate we have an action plan for the community to change to cleaner and greener electric vehicles.

I and other Members would willingly give up our £500.00 (5% increase in our allowance) to achieve this in the next year.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

I'd like to reassure all members that I share Cllr Ezzard's sense of urgency on this matter and have been working closely with officers to ensure that we are able to meet national and local expectations about electric vehicle charge point provision as soon as we can. We intend to place an order with a private sector company called JoJu very shortly to install 53 fast charge point sockets in 23 new car parks (including in Wareham*) and replace the 5 rapid chargers we already have, which have regrettably not been as reliable as we'd have liked in recent years. I've recently signed an Executive Decision Notice to that effect. We plan to start installing them this autumn – I'd like to be more specific, but the final details are still being worked out. The good news is that this company is willing to invest in Dorset, and is installing the charge points at no cost to the Council.

With regard to ensuring that systems are universal, Cllr Ezzard is right to raise that point. There are two things that we are doing. Firstly, we have partnered with a number of local authorities in the Central Southern Framework which covers most of the South of England with a single charging network. All of our new charge points I mentioned will have the most commonly used connection types. Secondly we are working with partners in the Subnational Transport Body to make this point to Government. It's not a problem that is unique to Dorset but one we take very seriously, and I'm sure you appreciate that there is only so much we can do at a local level, hence the need to work closely with other local authorities on this matter.

*Rempstone Centre car park, Church Street, Wareham, BH20 4NX