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DORSET COUNCIL - CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 MARCH 2021

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Peter Wharf (Vice-Chairman), Ray Bryan, Graham Carr-Jones, Tony Ferrari, Laura Miller, Andrew Parry, Gary Suttle, Jill Haynes and David Walsh

Apologies: no apologies to report

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Piers Brown, Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Kelvin Clayton, Cllr Toni Coombs, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Matthew Hall, Cllr Brian Heatley, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Nick Ireland, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Stella Jones, Cllr Andrew Kerby, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Maria Roe, Cllr Andrew Starr, Cllr Clare Sutton, Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Gill Taylor, Cllr David Tooke, Cllr Daryl Turner, Cllr Kate Wheller and Cllr John Worth

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Bridget Downton (Head of Business Insight and Corporate Communications), David McIntosh (Corporate Director (HR & OD)), Claire Shiels (Corporate Director - Commissioning, Quality & Partnerships), Rebecca Forrester (Business Intelligence & Performance), Mark Blackman (Corporate Director - Education and Learning), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children) and Neil Turner (Development Team Leader, Highways)

93. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman at a date in the future.

94. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest to report.

95. **Public Participation**

There were 3 questions and 1 statement received from the public. These questions were read out by Matt Prosser, Chief Executive and Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and responded to by the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s).

A copy of the full questions and the detailed responses are set out in Appendix 1 these minutes.

96. **Questions from Members**

There were no questions received from Councillors.

97. **Forward Plan**

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for March to June 2021 was received and noted.

98. **Dorset Council Plan: Quarter 3 Performance Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change set out an update on the Quarter 3 performance for the period October to December 2020. In particular he highlighted areas of concern, where matters had improved and why.

In respect of apprenticeships, members asked that the decline be robustly investigated; investing in young people was crucial as they were an important asset to the council and local area.

In response to a question about climate change and carbon footprint measures, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would discuss this with the appropriate Portfolio Holder for Climate Change as part of the move of this project from the Executive Advisory Panel to the Place and Resources Overview Committee in the coming months.

Decision

- (a) That the progress against the Council Plan priorities as show in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet of 2 March 2021 be noted;
- (b) That the amended Council Plan performance monitoring framework as shown in appendix 2 of the report be agreed.

Reason for the decision

To ensure progress toward the Council Plan is measured and monitored.

99. **Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning set out a report on the interim strategy to continue granting planning permission for new development and facilitating growth.

Members were advised that this strategy was needed to help address emissions caused by the additional car trips from new development. The proposed joint strategy with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council would provide interim mitigation measures in advance of any formal policy position set out in the emerging BCP Council and Dorset Council local plans.

Decision

- (a) That the Dorset Heathlands Interim Air Quality Strategy covering the period 2020-2025 be adopted;
- (b) That up to £187,000 be allocated from CIL to fund a project coordinator, delivery of projects and monitoring over a five year period.

Reason for the decision

An interim strategy is needed to allow the Council to continue granting planning permission for new development and facilitating growth. The proposed interim strategy will simplify the planning application process by removing the need for applicants to identify and implement bespoke mitigation projects, in most cases, to mitigate the air quality impact of developments upon the Dorset Heathlands. Work needs to begin immediately on identifying and implementing projects.

100. Dorset and BCP joint Local Transport Plan development

Cabinet considered a report seeking support to review and refresh the joint local transport plan with Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch Council (BCP). Members asked questions and made observations around the following areas:

- Consider reviewing joint policy development with partners such as BCP;
- Concerns expressed around the quality of the local rail and road networks. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would report back to the individual councillor concerned;
- The importance of working with neighbouring councils to progress transport planning;
- Local rural transport was a priority and feedback for the Rural Transport EAP would be available in the near future.

Decision

That the commitment of resources within existing budgets be agreed, to take forward the revised Local Transport Plan, associated area transport strategies and other supporting strategies.

Reason for the decision

To seeking support to review and refresh the joint Local Transport Plan jointly with BCP to align with the emerging Local Plans. The new plan will steer the future transport strategy for Dorset and how we spend our £1.9M Local Transport Capital Block Funding allocation from DfT.

101. Dorset Council Tourist Information Centres - Service review: consultation responses and next steps

In introducing the report, the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services stated that tourist information centres were a discretionary service and there was currently disparity across the council area. She sought members agreement on the way forward for Dorset Council in respect of its approach to

funding and managing tourist information centres. Members were further advised that the Place & Resources Overview Committee endorsed the recommendations set out in the report at their meeting on 25 February 2021.

Decision

- (a) That Dorset Council stops directly funding tourist information centres (TICs) in Dorchester, Sherborne and Wareham.
- (b) That Dorset Council continues to work with the Town Councils and/or other local services and will consider one-off support funding for suitable transitional arrangements to reduce the impact of the closure of the TIC on local people.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place, to agree any support payment arrangements.
- (d) That Dorset Council continues to promote Dorset as a visitor destination through its Visit Dorset website.

Reasons for the decision

- (a) TICs are a discretionary service and there is currently disparity across the council area. Dorset Council cannot afford to fund TICs across the whole of the Council area.
- (b) To support local alternatives, for example via Town Council, that may wish to facilitate transitional arrangements in place of TIC services.
- (c) To provide transitional funding, for example via Town Councils, that may wish to support alternative arrangements in place of TIC services.
- (d) To support the tourism sector to attract visitors to Dorset, particularly focussing on extending the tourism season.

102. Youth Executive Advisory Panel

The Portfolio Holder to Children, Education, Skills and Early Health presented a report from the Youth Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) and asked members to note its contents and support the implementation of its recommendations.

It was acknowledged that many of the solutions to the provision of youth services relied on co-partnership approaches to achieve the best outcomes. Overall the work of the EAP was welcomed. The Chairman felt that the report demonstrated the quality and value of cross-party working and Cabinet welcomed the report.

Decision

- (a) That the findings set out in the report of 2 March 2021 be noted;
- (b) That the implementation of the recommendations of the Youth Executive Advisory Panel (EAP) be supported and endorsed.

Reason for the decision

The cross party EAP gathered information on the current youth offer and plans for its development to support the delivery of the council's plan.

103. **Procurement Forward Plan report - Over £500k (2021-2022)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Procurement presented report in respect of proposed contracts as set out in Appendix 1.

In response to a question regarding a review of procurement policy and its relationship with climate change, the Portfolio Holder confirmed climate implications were an important factor as part of the council's business case and rationale for each procurement considered.

Decision

That Cabinet agrees

- (a) To begin each of the procurement processes listed in Appendix 1 to the report.
- (b) That in each instance the further step of making any contract award be delegated to the relevant Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the relevant Executive Director.

Reason for the decision

Cabinet is required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. It is also good governance to provide Cabinet with a summary of all proposed procurements prior to them formally commencing.

104. **Review of Redundancy Multiplier and Exit Pay Cap Update**

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change presented a report that sought to extend the current redundancy multiplier for a further 12 months and that another review take place towards the end of 2021. Cabinet was fully supportive of the recommendation.

Decision

- (a) That the current 1.75 redundancy multiplier be extended for a further 12 months. *This rate will be introduced for all employees.*
- (b) That a further review of the redundancy multiplier takes place towards the end of 2021, to ensure any agreement of a new rate of redundancy multiplier from 1 April 2022 takes into consideration any potential reintroduction of an Exit Pay Cap or reforms to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

Reason for the decision

The impact of Covid-19 has seen some delays in progressing convergence activity across the council and which will result in employees

being made redundant after 31st March 2021. If the council introduces a reduction to its level of redundancy multiplier this will result in employees in these areas being treated less favourably than those that have been included in reviews already taken forward.

105. Joint Archives Services: Review: Review of Fees and Charges

The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services presented a recommendation from the Joint Archive Advisory Board of 5 February 2021.

Decision

That the revised fees and charges as set out in the recommendations to the executive bodies of the two councils (in Appendices 1-2 of the report to the Joint Archives Advisory Board of 5 February 2021) be approved for implementation from 1 April 2021.

Reason for decision

To sustain the Joint Archives Service's budget and income levels through robust and benchmarked charging for services.

106. Cabinet member update on policy development matter referred to an Overview Committee(s) for consideration

The items listed below would be considered by committees in the coming months:

APSE Review of Waste Services would be considered by Place & Resources Overview Committee on 9 March 2021 and a number of policy areas would likely require further review following that meeting.

The following reports would be coming through the committee system shortly:

Home First Model
Day Opportunities

107. Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel Update

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment updated members on the progress of the work of the Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel including:-

- A update on the consultation process;
- Work was continuing on progressing the grant of 19 million pounds;
- The Strategy and Action Plan was a living document that would be shortly passed on to Place and Resources Overview Committee to take the action plan forward;
- A update on a recent meeting regarding development of hydrogen power

108. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

109. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Cllr P Wharf seconded by Cllr D Walsh

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following 2 item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The Chairman closed the public element of the meeting and the MS Teams Live Event ended

110. **Tracking and support service for young people not in education, employment or training - Options appraisal of potential models for delivery**

Cabinet considered a report on the proposal to develop an in-house service delivery model for the provision of a tracking and support service for young people post 16 when the current contract comes to an end.

Decision

- (a) That the development of an alternative, in house, service delivery model for a post16 tracking and transition support service be approved. *This would include support for young people who are at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET) and re-engagement support for those who are NEET. This is currently provided via an information, advice and guidance service delivered by an externally commissioned voluntary and community sector provider.*
- (b) That the resources needed to deliver the service in line with statutory requirements from within Children's Services base budget be approved

Reason for the decision

To enable the council to meet its statutory requirements as set out in the report. Provision of resource for this service has been built into the proposed children's services base budget for 2021/22.

111. **Forward Funding of the Eastern Link Road, West Parley**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented a report on the forward funding of the Eastern Link Road, West Parley

Decision

That the report be deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet.

Reason for the decision

The item was deferred for further consideration.

Appendix 1 - Public Participation

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.55 am

Chairman

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Cabinet 2 March 2021

Public Questions

1. Question from John Calvert - Item 10 Tourist Information Centre Funding

The Executive Summary comments that TICs provide the following key services: ~ free information including maps, local attractions and events, general information about the local area, bus/transport provision and information about accessibility ~ ticket sales for some transport providers and for local events ~accommodation information and booking for the local area.

As a resident of Dorchester I have been trying to discover what decisions are being taken on my behalf. I eventually found recommendations about the Tourist Information Centre on the Agenda for the Place and Resources Overview Committee and assumed there would be a constructive discussion and so I asked a question about it.

I was surprised therefore to see the identical document in the Cabinet papers published only a few days later and before the Overview Committee had met.

What happens if the Overview Committee changes the suggested recommendations, or is that not usually allowed politically?

2. Question from John Calvert

As a resident of Dorchester for over 10 years I have used the Dorchester Tourist Information for all these when they were available and I use them in other towns every time my wife and I visit for the first time.

This situation is not recent, there were plans for the TIC to go into the Shire Hall but then there weren't. The obvious next place was the new Library but no plans there. Finally the reorganisation of the Corn Exchange surely offered possibilities.

The response from Dorchester Town Council is sympathetic but seemingly at an early stage.

My question is this - If Tourism is so important for Dorset and in particular for Dorchester why is the Council stopping the funding and releasing the expert staff before agreeing a replacement service?

Some transitional funding is no substitute for proper planning.

Response for both questions from the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services

Thank you Mr Calvert for submitting your questions. I will reply to both together as we have already provided a response to the second question at the place and

resources overview committee on 25th February and the council's usual practice is just to answer questions once. That said, I think this response is relevant to both questions.

As Mr Calvert rightly points out, the cabinet papers were published before the place and resources committee had considered the report. This was necessary because of the timing of the two meetings and the need to publish the reports in good time. But cabinet are always keen to hear the views of the overview committee and cabinet members have received an update of the key points that were made at the overview committee. On this occasion, no changes were made to the recommendations in the report. But several members of the overview committee made the key point that Dorset Council's role in relation to tourism is a strategic one – our role is to attract visitors to Dorset and we have a website – visit Dorset that aims to do that. Several of the committee members referred to visit Dorset and made suggestions about how we might develop this further to support our local tourism businesses. We will consider these helpful comments with colleagues who maintain visit Dorset

3. Question from Rupert Hardy (Chairman of ND group – Campaign to Protect Rural England) – Local Plan Consultation

Clause 2.7.22 of the Local Plan Consultation says that “Policy DEV1 establishes a housing requirement for 30,481 new homes during the period 2021-2038” but also that “discussions are taking place to establish whether there is a need for Dorset Council to meet an unmet need from Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole and the New Forest”. Council officers Hilary Jordan and Trevor Sneller have said publicly, but not in print, that in the light of this unmet need Dorset's housing target should therefore be 39,000 homes, even though we believe there has been no formal request yet from either Council. Could Dorset Council please confirm which of these two figures represents the Council's housing target, and if it is 30,481 homes what does the 39,000 figure then represent?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

National policy says that local planning authorities should be meeting the target for their area as established through the standard methodology, and that in addition, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.

The consultation document for the local plan sets out a housing target of 30,481 homes over the plan period, based on the standard methodology. The document acknowledges however that that is not necessarily the final target figure. We do not

yet have any formal requests from neighbouring councils to consider meeting some of their unmet housing needs, but this is a possibility. And it is also important to bear in mind that the target figure resulting from the standard methodology may change during the preparation of the plan, as for example new affordability data becomes available. The standard methodology figure will become fixed at the time that the plan is submitted for examination, but up to that point, we will need to amend our target to accommodate such changes.

So while the consultation document sets out a target of 30,481, this is not necessarily the final target figure and we do not currently know what that will be. The figure of 39,285 is the sum of the housing supply set out in the consultation document. The housing supply and the housing target are two quite different things and it is not being suggested that the target should be 39,285. However, the consultation document includes a supply that exceeds the currently-assumed target, and this has been done deliberately for a number of reasons.

Firstly, we may need to increase (or reduce) the target as a result of changes to the statistics that form the inputs to the standard methodology.

Secondly, as explained above, we may need to consider requests to meet some of the housing needs of neighbouring areas.

Thirdly, this is a consultation and we may well wish to make changes to the proposals as a result. These might involve taking out some of the potential development sites or reducing the estimates of their capacity, which would therefore reduce the supply.

And finally, it is prudent to plan for a housing supply that exceeds the target. Councils are continually required to be able to demonstrate a five-year supply of land for housing, as if they do not then they are unable to give full weight to their local policies and must apply the national 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' when considering applications. Changing circumstances, including market fluctuations, new constraints evidence and infrastructure delivery issues, can affect the speed at which sites come forward for development and the number of homes eventually provided on them. If we are only just providing enough to meet our targets, then we can very quickly lose the five-year land supply, thereby losing our local control over development.

4. Statement from Nicola Newman, Chief Executive of Ansbury Guidance - Item 19 Tracking and support service for young people not in education, employment or training - Options appraisal of potential models for delivery

I am CEO (P/T) of Ansbury – the current externally commissioned provider. We evolved from Dorset Careers and Connexions.

This is my perspective on the impact of current proposed service and funding changes, informed by my voluntary roles as a Board member of:

- Careers England
- Dorset LEP
- Dorset Chamber of Commerce
- Dorset Skills Advisory Panel

and as a recent Governor of The Swanage School.

I would like Councillors to be sure the proposed reductions are conscious, and their impact is expected, and planned for in these extraordinary times.

NEET support and Career Guidance is an important ‘tip’ of a large Dorset-wide employability system, invisible until it goes wrong. Early intervention in schools reduces NEET numbers, improves lives and reduces costs long-term.

2021/2022 is a difficult year for all young people seeking further education, training and employment. They are the COVID generation who have had learning, exams, friendships, and plans disrupted and constantly changed. Unemployment is expected to rise. Dorset’s young people will need more support to plan their future in 2021/2022 but will get less than they have ever had.

‘Career’ is an individual’s journey through life, learning and work. It is where individual psychology and aspirations meet social structure. Research evidence confirms that professional, impartial Career Guidance has an observable impact on young people’s progression.

If vulnerable young people have no goals or plans they believe in, more will develop barriers to achieving: long-term unemployment, poor mental health, addiction, crime, exploitation, County Lines, homelessness. This will be a net cost to the Council and society in increased Social Care, NHS, Universal Credit, housing and anti-social behaviour costs – but more importantly young people will not be fulfilling their potential.

The IAGT contract, awarded in 2016, must end in 2021. I believe the decision has already been made to remove Council funding for professional (L6) Careers Guidance for vulnerable young people – those with EHCPs, in/leaving Care and/or at risk of becoming NEET – and the proposal is to do the same for vulnerable NEET young people. This will negatively impact all these young people.

- This gap cannot be filled by the Careers Hub or unqualified Enterprise Advisers.

- Schools don't have sufficient funding, or time, to provide professional (L6) Career Guidance (even if technically it's their role to do so and Ofsted requires it) - missed learning is their current priority
- Level 6 Advisers are scarce and there is no 'supply' service if school-based staff are absent due to ill health/maternity/caring responsibilities

Changes in funding and services this year will have wide negative impact – Dorset young people deserve better - temporary COVID funding for 1 year could mitigate the transition and better enable a long-term plan.

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