

EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 18 February 2019 at 6.30 pm

Present:-

Cllr Mrs T B Coombs – Chairman

Cllr B Goringe – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr S Bartlett, Cllr C R W Beck, Cllr D B F Burt, Cllr S Butler,
Cllr R Bryan, Cllr A A J Clarke, Cllr R D Cook, Cllr Mrs J Dover,
Cllr M R Dyer, Cllr S G Flower, Cllr S Gibson, Cllr P R Harrison,
Cllr K D Johnson, Cllr Mrs G Logan, Cllr Mrs B T Manuel,
Cllr D Morgan, Cllr P G Oggelsby, Cllr D G L Packer, Cllr M Parkes,
Cllr A Parry, Cllr J L Robinson, Cllr G W Russell, Cllr D W Shortell,
Cllr A Skeats and Cllr S S Tong

Apologies: Cllr Mrs C Lugg

280. Prayers

Prayers were led by the Reverend Everton McLeod of All Saints Church, Hampreston.

281. Declarations of Interests by Members

There were no declarations of interest submitted on this occasion.

282. Minutes

The minutes of the special and ordinary meetings held on 10 December 2018 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Voting: Unanimous

283. Announcements

The Chairman referred to her list of engagements attended since the last meeting, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Chairman reported that she had attended a varied and long list of engagements since the last meeting, making particular mention to the reopening of the Heatherlands after £0.5 million work, the Chairman praised the work of the Officers in the project and stated that she was very impressed with what is being offered at the centre.

In closing the Chairman reminded Members that the following events were scheduled to take place over the forthcoming month;

- Community Awards at Remedy Oak on 21 March 2019 to which all Members have been invited.

- Civic Service of thanksgiving in the Minster on 4 March 2019 at 1.45pm, the intention for which is to make this a high profile event to say thank you for East Dorset.

The Leader echoed the Chairman's praise over the work that had been carried out at Heatherlands highlighting it as a good example of some of the legacy that East Dorset will leave behind. In addition the Leader advised Members that the Council was going through a process of asset transfers to some of the Parish and Town Councils in advance of 1 April and that regeneration work was about to begin in Ferndown.

Further to this the Leader highlighted the work he had been doing in respect of the Shadow Council, in particular his role as Chairman of the Boundary Review task and finish group and the Governance task and finish group. In respect of this the Leader thanked Members and Officers for their support in work which has been carried out.

The Chief Executive updated Members with regards to service delivery and service continuity after the 1 April 2019. Members were advised that there had been a lot of work going and a lot of focus on day one service delivery to make sure the new council gets off to the best possible start. Further to this the Chief Executive advised that there are approximately 280 staff on the list of staff who will transfer to Dorset Council, and that an agreement had been reached with BCP that staff would be able to continue to work from the Civic Offices in Christchurch if appropriate for at least 12 months.

284. Questions by Members of the Public

The Chairman advised that two questions had been received from Members of the Public on this occasion.

Question by Mr Colin English

I commend the Council on the Vision and the Objectives set out in the Local Plan Review.

In particular:

The Vision Statement clearly says, "Development will be focused on locations accessible by different modes of transport and along the main transport corridors, bus routes, and town centres".

But the plan proposes to locate by far the largest concentration of houses, some 40% of the total, in the village of Alderholt. This is at least 1000 houses, but officers admit that the land allocated could accommodate 2400 houses. The village has poor road access, no employment opportunities, no public transport and lacks easy access to health and education. This proposal will damage not just Alderholt, but surrounding villages such as Cranbourne, Rockbourne, Harbridge, Sandleheath and even Fordingbridge.

This flies in the face of the plan's objectives: For example:

Objective 3:

"carbon emissions for transport to be reduced by locating development in accessible locations....by bike, foot and public transport". They won't be.

Objective 5:

The proposals do not "maintain the character of local communities" as required in the policy.

Objective 6

The proposals fail to provide housing "mainly in areas either close to facilities or with good transport links" and gives people no other choice other than travel by car.

Objective 7

The proposals create a dormitory town not a community by specifically placing new employment away from Alderholt."

I therefore ask Councillor Cook if you accept the policies in the local plan closely accord with the NPPF, whereas the "options for consultation" has yet to be appraised in terms of transport implications, viability and a detailed sustainability assessment?

If that is true, do you accept that the EDDC policies and objectives must be given more weight by DUA than the options?

Response by Councillor R Cook (Portfolio Holder for Planning)

It is firstly important to clarify that the Local Plan Review – in its entirety, is an Options document. Therefore all aspects of the document have the same status, and it is not a case of the vision and objectives superseding the options. The plan must be read as a whole, as it represents a planning strategy for the whole District of East Dorset.

It is also important to emphasise, that at this stage, these are options – which have been the subject of public consultation to inform further stages of work on the local plan. In the case of housing proposals at Alderholt, and indeed other places, we are examining the extensive responses we have received, and are working to address the issues raised.

The aim of the Alderholt proposals has always been to create a more sustainable settlement, with improvements to facilities, services, open spaces and transport links. It is not our intention to create a large and unsustainable dormitory settlement. Further transport studies, together with proposed master planning are to be progressed with the specific aim of creating a more sustainable village, and enhancing rather than detracting from, its character.

In summary, I am satisfied that the plan complies with the objectives and policies of the NPPF, and sustainability appraisal of the Options has been carried out. There is much further work to do going forward prior to the next formal stage of consultation on the local plan, and this work is already in progress.

Supplementary Question by Mr Colin English

The options for the infrastructure improvements could also be included and haven't been. You say that the various elements have equal strength but frankly they don't. A chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and your 7 objectives 3 of them are completely broken and so your chain is broken. The question I would like to ask is;

You do appear to be giving considerable weight to meeting the housing target almost irrespective of sustainability issues and NPPF does in fact mention sustainability I think 56 times and you've completely ignored it by requiring every one of those new workers and indeed students living in the proposed houses to travel out some considerable distance and so that's hardly sustainable.

The question is can you show me where in NPPF it tells you to put delivery of housing above sustainability issues?

Response by Councillor R Cook (Portfolio Holder for Planning)

Not having had advanced notice of that particular question I think it would be better that the questioner had a detailed written answer following this meeting with the extracts from the NPPF.

Question by Mr Richard Lonsdale

As I'm sure you all agree, it should be the right of all members of the public to have access to public meetings at all levels local government. Many however do not have this access for several reasons. A solution to this problem is I believe both cheap and easy. Behind me is my mobile phone, and an induction loop receiver live streaming this meeting.

This today is just an experiment. As part of the research for this experiment however I discovered that whilst pretty well every town or parish hall has internet access, they do not have induction loops for those with hearing difficulties. A simple suitable induction loop system is of the order of £200. Microphones and mixers are more expensive but there may be a few going cheap sometime at the end of April when this and other councils are no more.

In an age when it shouldn't even be necessary for me to be physically sitting here to ask this question, I would like to ask if you will all go back to the town and parish councils within your wards and suggest they look into providing easy access to meetings using live streaming. There are plenty of people who I'm sure would be willing to volunteer to help achieve and perhaps in bringing these towns and parishes together to share equipment and volunteers, some vestige of East Dorset District Council will remain after it's gone.

If you would like to get in contact with me, for those of you who don't already have it, I will leave my email address and telephone number as I'd be more than happy to share my discoveries and other peoples' comments to me.

Response by Councillor A Skeats (Portfolio Holder for Community)

It is a matter for each parish or town council to decide whether to introduce live streaming of their meetings to their communities, however, I am confident that every councillor in this chamber supports the principles of open and transparent decision making. It will be matter for each councillor to decide whether to raise this with their respective local councils, however, may I suggest that when you have concluded your research and are in a position to share your discoveries, that you approach the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils who may be better placed to

distribute your findings. The contact details for DAPTC together with all the parish and town councils in Dorset are available on the Dorset for You website.

285. Petitions by Members of the Public

The Chairman reported that no petitions had been received under Council Procedure Rule 10 on this occasion.

286. Deputations by Members of the Public

The Chairman reported that no deputations had been received under Council Procedure Rule 10 on this occasion.

287. Questions by Members of the Council

The Chairman reported that three questions had been received by a Member of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 9(2) as follows:-

Question by Councillor S Bartlett

1. What engagement has there been with Town and Parish Councils that reside within our District Boundary by the Shadow Authorities Task and Finish group that was tasked with this responsibility. My understanding is that Members from this Authority, East Dorset District Council, were placed on the Task and Finish Group to undertake this work. What meetings have taken place with our Town and Parish Councils and how has any information from those meetings been used to help form the collaborative work stream in establishing how the new Authority, the Dorset Council will work with our Town and Parish Councils going forward into the future.

Question by Councillor S Bartlett

2. As we have a duty to our residents while we are still a sovereign Council, I believe that duty extends into the future in as much as the structure that we are putting in place for how the new Authority The Dorset Council works in relationship with its services and provisions that it will be responsible for to our public. It is a responsibility that we are all charged with so that when East Dorset District council ceases to exist our residents will be administered by a competent new Authority. I consider that over the last eighteen months it has become apparent how well East Dorset District Council has performed despite horrific local Government cuts, when compared with the other sovereign Councils across Dorset. This is of course largely down to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of our officers. I would also like to think that the partnership working between the minority Lib Dem Group and the Conservative Lead Group has contributed to civilised chamber in East Dorset District Council, allowing this Authority to be the success that it has been when compared to other Authorities across the County and even wider afield.

I would therefore like to ask for an assurance that in the future our residents will be administered by a competent Authority with particular regard to the three area boards that are to be set up.

Question by Councillor S Bartlett

3. During the process to set up a New Unitary Authority in Dorset, sadly a necessity due to the appalling cuts to Local Government by Westminster, a view that won't be shared unanimously across this Chamber, there has been an opportunity to engage in asset transfers. It is clear to see that the Districts and Boroughs across the County have approached the question of Asset transfers with differing and varying degrees of fairness to the casual observer.

North Dorset District Council has been transferring assets since 2008 and has little else left to transfer and has worked within the rules to grant £500,000 to Towns and Parishes within its District.

West Dorset District Council is granting £350,000 to its Towns and Parishes and projects.

East Dorset District Council has made capital grants of £159,000 for projects within its District. It would be fair to say I think that East Dorset has played within the rules that came down to us through the Structural Change Order from Westminster. The Cabinet Committee (one year strategy) met last week so at the time of writing this I do not know what their decisions were concerning the business that was before them.

Could I therefore ask that the Lead Members of this Authority go back to the Shadow Executive Committee and ask that they should consider the Wednesday Principles in relation to all Towns, with particular attention to historical Market Towns and the often peculiarities that often exist with these Towns in terms of future Asset Transfers and any financial help forthcoming from the new authority there may be in accommodating those Towns with restrictive Parish Boundaries that impact on the precept they are able to raise. Many of these Towns are going to destinations and are extremely important for Tourism within the County, this brings about high precepts due to the infrastructure within these Towns the cost burden of which often falls upon the residents of the town.

Response by Councillor S Tong (Portfolio Holder for Change and Transformation)

I thank Cllr Bartlett for his questions. The points which he raises fall within the jurisdiction of the Shadow Authority, which is responsible for addressing all these issues. I shall ensure that our officers forward his concerns to the appropriate sources within the Shadow Authority for their response. Cllr Bartlett may find his role as a County Councillor helpful in this regard.

Supplementary Question by Councillor S Bartlett

I am somewhat disappointed in the answer because in terms of my question the Shadow Authority is made up of the sovereign councils, the six authorities that go to making up that Shadow Authority and there are Members from within this chamber that sit on that Executive and therefore I

do feel that it is within reason to ask those questions, and I am disappointed that they haven't been answered in the way I would have liked. I would ask Cllr Tong to please answer the questions.

Response by Councillor S Tong (Portfolio Holder for Change and Transformation)

Councillor Tong referred Councillor Bartlett to his previous response.

288. Planning Committee, 5 December 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes, as submitted, be adopted.

Voting: Nem.Con (1 Abstention)

289. Cabinet Committee (One Year Strategy), 18 December 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes, as submitted, be adopted.

Voting: Unanimous

290. Planning Committee, 16 January 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes, as submitted, be adopted.

Voting: Nem.Con (1 Abstention)

291. Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, 22 January 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes, as submitted, be adopted.

Voting: Nem.Con (1 Abstention)

292. Cabinet, 5 February 2019

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes, as submitted, be adopted.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting ended at 7.06 pm

CHAIRMAN