



Council

Date: Thursday, 15 July 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: A link to the meeting can be found on the front page of the agenda.

Membership: (Quorum 21)

The Council membership is listed on the following page.

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ (Sat Nav DT1 1EE)

For more information about this agenda please contact Democratic Services Susan Dallison Susan.dallison@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk



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Due to the current coronavirus pandemic the Council has reviewed its approach to holding council meetings. Members of the public are welcome to view the meeting on line by using the following link to access the Dorset Council meeting.

Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an i phone, i pad, or android phone will need to down the free Microsoft Team App to sign in as a guest. It is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. Please note that public speaking has been suspended however public participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below.

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A recording of the meeting will be available on the council's website after the event.

Membership of Dorset Council

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

AGENDA

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5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

5 - 8

A period of 30 minutes is allocated to receive and respond to questions and statements on the business of the Council in the following order:

- (a) Questions and statements from Town and Parish Councils;
- (b) Questions and statements from those living or working in the Dorset Council area;

A person or organisation can ask either 2 questions, or 2 statements or 1 question and 1 statement at each meeting.

****Important**The full text of the question or statement must be received by 8.30am on Monday 12th July and each question or statement is limited to 450 words.**

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic public speaking has been suspended, however questions and statements will be published on the website and the Chairman of Council will decide whether a question or statement is to be read out aloud in whole, in part or not at all in the meeting. The Chairman will invite the relevant member to respond to the questions and statements at the meeting.

Details of the Council's procedure rules can be found at: [Public Participation at Full Council](#)

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**Full Council
15 July 2021**

Questions and Statements submitted for the Public Participation Period

Question 1 – submitted by Toby Branston

Dorset Council has signed up to addressing the Climate and Ecological Emergency. Therefore can they answer why they are prepared to put over 800 houses on organically farmed fields in Wool with high levels of biodiversity including at least 10 priority species of birds such as cornbunting and yellowhammer plus brown hares. For reference; 'priority species' are those that were identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The identified fields are important for several priority species of bat (all species are protected) which feed nightly on the abundant insect population of over 300 recorded species. These fields are also the most diverse botanically in the area due to being managed organically and sympathetically for wildlife.

Question 2 & 3 – submitted by Russell Todd

The Broad Oak Residents Association (BORA) has recently been involved with a planning application and, as a result of engaging in the planning process we believe that it is unfair and lacks rigour:

It is not particularly clear how the process works and now having taken part, it would appear that the process is obliging the objector to second guess what the applicant might say in response to your objection. This has the result of making your objection overly long and potentially unclear.

Question 2

The planning process does not automatically notify neighbours that an application is starting or ongoing and if the applicant fails to put up a notice to find out what is going on you have to constantly refer to the Dorset Council (DC) website. Not everybody uses the internet and it can be difficult to find planning applications that are relevant for your immediate area.

I would have thought that DC has a duty to inform those with neighbouring properties or has a process of notification that allows for those who do not have access to the internet or do not use it?

Question 3

When an applicant makes a statement why does DC not require evidence to support that statement? Most people keep records of business or receipts for other purposes and it would not be hard to add this to an application.

There does not seem to be an overarching view of individual planning applications and how that affects what is going on beyond an individual application. A series of individual applications in a small area can have significant impacts on roads and

services, but this is not accounted for in the current process.

BORA request that the committee review the planning application process to create a fairer system that has some rigour to it, so that all parties involved in an application can have some confidence that a fair decision has been arrived at and that the process is not leaning one way.

Question 4 – submitted by Helen Sumbler

With regard to the Community Governance Review of Parishes in the Dorset Council area:

What is the background behind this / the urgency to undertake the governance review at this particular time, when we are still in the midst of the Covid pandemic, the impact of Brexit is still unknown and there are so many other pressing matters that require council officer resources; and also bearing in mind that any recommendations would not take effect until 2024, 2 years after the Order is made?

Question 5 – submitted by Helen Sumbler

With regard to the Community Governance Review of Parishes in the Dorset Council area:

As part of the review process, will Dorset Council be proposing any changes, or will the only change proposals to be developed into recommendations be those as a result of submissions / representations received from the parties consulted?

Statement – submitted by John Grantham

Item 14 tonight gives the opportunity for ANOTHER Council to move to REAL democracy..... FROM a position where the Leader of any biggest party, (voted in on just 39.3% of votes), is able to hand-pick from just one party, the 10 councillors, assisted by Lead Members, to comprise the Cabinet, which effectively then determines policy.

When “Public First Group” planned to achieve a Committee system for West Dorset District Council in 2015, an essential step was Research. In Sherborne over 2 days we interviewed 306 people at our stand, discussing the merits of Cabinet v Committee. Before we started an official-looking gentleman said “Everyone wants the Cabinet system!”

Not so! The research found less than 50% even knew there WAS a ‘WDDC’ and a ‘DCC’. Under 10% knew there was a Cabinet system operating. And of the 306 respondents ...301 opted for the Committee system,.... most scarcely believing the archaic nature of the Cabinet system.

That was when we KNEW we’d win a referendum. We circulated 2000 notes to Dorchester homes mid-week, describing the two systems, saying we had a “signing-stand” in South St on Saturday. NO LESS THAN 800 people came out and signed!! They knew the Cabinet system had protected new council offices being built, despite

Dorchester's Town Referendum where 93% had voted against. The build simultaneously obliterated a 226-bay central public-car-park in Dorchester. Among councils converting, using the 2011 Localism Act, were **Fylde**, then **Canterbury**, (where the leading party converted VOLUNTARILY, seeing the hordes of public, signing). By converting VOLUNTARILY they SAVED THE COUNCIL AND TAX-PAYER from referendum costs. **West Dorset** then voted by a landslide for the Committee system. Recently **Cheshire East**, whose Cabinet was judged to have acted highly partially, converted; and at **Sheffield City Council**, Labour's Cabinet system was able to protect its policy of chopping down thousands of trees on Council property, only stopped by public clamour and the Law at 5,400 fellings; leading to a landslide referendum vote FOR the Committee system.

PREDICTION: Hopefully the Council will vote tonight for the Committee system: with the public now meeting again, and with social media, the public WILL get to know the facts. If it's voted down tonight, but all the unfairly squeezed parties make the Committee system their no. 1 election promise at the next Council elections, they will undoubtedly take control of the Council and introduce the Committee system. There couldn't be a better time to implement the 'Committee' system, especially with a dozen WDDC councillors having worked it already, and staff-members who implemented its introduction. Congratulations if you can introduce this **non-party-political** PROCESS in May 2022 to turbo-charge your productivity!

Question 6 – submitted by John Grantham

Tonight there will of course be a vote on the possible introduction of the 'Committee' system into Dorset Council. There is of course experience of a public vote on this issue from the old West Dorset District Council, where a landslide vote by the electorate in favour of the Committee system occurred in 2016.

I hope tonight all are able to defuse the '**party-political**' angle to this issue. This is a vote purely on 'process', not 'politics', and it allows the council the opportunity to show its credentials in terms of its belief in **fairly and proportionately reflecting** the electorate's votes as they've cast them.

I believe Dorset Council could reasonably easily move into the Committee process by May 2022, and that its standing would be strongly and authoritatively enhanced.

I have voted many ways in my life but have concluded that a fair and just **system** is the vital determinant of the Democracy this country holds in trust.

As you can probably imagine, in the landslide referendum win in 2016 in West Dorset, there were many, many voters from the ruling party who voted for the Committee system, (I estimate several thousands), seeing it as 'just' and the 'right thing to do'. In fact the vote was not about politics, but about process.

In 2015 a councillor from the minority Conservative party in Reading, Berks, approached our stand saying they really hoped we'd get the Committee system. They said that as a result of that Council having 'gone Committee' they now went to the Council meetings with hope and relish, sitting as a minority party councillor WITH the other parties in Committee, instead of apart, and not looking to see where there were weaknesses in their arguments. Instead they were at last able to use their collective brain-power to contribute, to look at and discuss together how they could crack critical issues on Children's Education, Social Services or the Housing Build programme.

My Question therefore is: At this late stage I would be interested to learn – if it is possible to say – if Councillors have your support in reassessing all they learn from

this evening and coming to their individual conclusions, and that you will promote the issue as a completely non-party-political 'free vote' on whether to introduce the Committee system in May 2022?

Question 7 – submitted by Dr Sandra Reeve

CEE Strategy documents - Appendix B

In Appendix B, it is noticeable that, apart from the targets, the only other section where the EAP is mentioned is in the Leadership and Governance section. In item 1, subject area "Ensure strong partnership set-up/over-sight, collaboration and 'bottom-up approach through community involvement (TPCs, young people, assemblies)" the comment in the Recommendation column is "Assemblies – EAP ruled out."

The assemblies that community groups ran to raise public awareness and increase the engagement with the recent Dorset Council CEE Strategy and Dorset Council Local Plan consultations were met with positive responses from the public. Surely the use of similar facilitated public assemblies (also known as peoples' assemblies, community assemblies and community conversations), that provide an opportunity for all participants to speak in a non-threatening, small group situation, could provide an additional means of engaging with the public about the CEE Strategy and Action Plans.

Could the Council please explain why the use of this form of public engagement has been ruled out?