

Shadow Dorset Council

Executive Committee

**Minutes of meeting held at South Walks House, Dorchester
on Monday 17 DECEMBER 2018.**

Present: Cllrs R Knox (Chairman), G Suttle (Vice-Chair), A Alford, P Batstone, J Cant, G Carr-Jones, T Ferrari, S Flower, M Hall, J Haynes, C Huckle, A Parry, M Penfold, B Quinn, S Tong, D Turner, D Walsh and P Wharf.

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting): Matt Prosser (Chief Executive Designate), Keith Cheesman (LGR Programme Director), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer, Designate), Jason Vaughan (Interim Section 151 Officer) and Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager - Dorset County Council).

In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny procedure Rules of the Shadow Dorset Council, the decisions set out in these minutes will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of five working days after the publication date.

87. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Steve Butler and Sherry Jespersen.

88. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations by members of disclosable pecuniary interests under the Shadow Dorset Council's Code of Conduct.

Cllr Jeff Cant made a non-pecuniary declaration in relation to minute 99 as although he owned property in Weymouth he considered its value unaffected by decisions concerning the former Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Offices at North Quay. The Interim Monitoring Officer confirmed his advice that there was not a disclosable pecuniary interest unless the proposal would have a financial impact on the value of property owned by a member.

89. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2018 were confirmed and signed.

90. Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 28.

91. Shadow Executive Forward Plan

The Committee received the latest draft Forward Plan, which included all decisions to be taken throughout the Shadow Dorset Council period until 1 April 2019.

It was reported that the item relating to the Convergence Plan for 14 January 2019 would now form part of the budget report at that meeting. Likewise, the item relating to the Transition Period Plan would be incorporated into the item on the Constitution.

Noted

92. **Programme Highlight Report (including Programme Budget)**

The Committee considered a report by the Programme Director which provided an overview of the Local Government Reorganisation Programme including milestone and implementation plan progress, workstream activity, convergence and transformation development. The risk facing the programme was also summarised, which had seen the budget position evolve and would be reported on 14 January 2019, which would build on convergence to enable a balanced budget.

A question from Cllr Lucy Hamilton was read out in her absence in relation to government funding to support transformation, and its impact on the budget. The question was answered by the Lead Member for Finance and is attached to these minutes as an annexure.

It was reported that since the previous meeting, when the first Gateway Review was discussed, arrangements had been put in place to involve the Leader and Deputy Leader, and Lead Members for HR and Workforce, Finance and Governance. Other Lead Members were encouraged to liaise with South West Audit Partnership colleagues if they wished to be further involved, as there had been a mixture of experiences and contact to date.

In relation to the request within the report to provide additional funding from sovereign councils towards the LGR Programme, it was confirmed that Weymouth & Portland, North Dorset and West Dorset had already made provision for additional funding to be provided and other councils would consider the request in due course.

Decision

1. That the progress made since the last Shadow Executive Committee meeting be noted.
2. That the request for resources and the funding approach as detailed in section 3 of the Programme Director's report be agreed.

Reason for Decision

Programme resource requirements are understood and met.

93. **Draft Statement of Common Ground on Strategic Planning Matters**

The Committee considered a report by the Lead Member for Planning on the preparation of a Statement of Common Ground to demonstrate the enhancement of cooperation that has taken place between adjoining local planning authorities and other bodies involved in the preparation of local plans. The draft statement was in the process of being considered by each sovereign council in Dorset for approval so that it was in place and would sit alongside local plans throughout examination, of which the Purbeck Local Plan would be in March 2019. Purbeck District Council and North Dorset District Council had agreed the statement without amendment to date.

Decision

That the draft Statement of Common Ground, attached as Appendix 1 to the Lead Member's report, be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the requirement for a Statement of Common Ground to be prepared, in association with the development of Local Plans, was met.

94. **Community Health Improvement Services Procurement**

The Committee considered a recommendation from the Joint Public Health Board held on 19 November 2018 on contracts for a range of Community Health Improvement Services that were due to expire at the end of March 2019. The Board made a number of decisions, of which the Shadow Executive Committee was requested to affirm.

Member discussed the range of contracts covered within the report, the flexibilities within them, and the increased budget for 2019/20. It was confirmed that the funding had been ring-fenced for Public Health services which included an increase from previous years, but the actual spend would be dependent on the number of service users who accessed the services following referral.

In relation to the monitoring of contracts to measure quality of the services provided, it was explained that the Joint Board members wanted to ensure that there was an assessment of interventions and outcomes to show if the committed spend made a difference in addition to information on the number of people who did not take up referrals was also useful. This was accepted by officers and would form part of the monitoring arrangements.

Decision

That the decisions of the Joint Public Health Board regarding Community Health Improvement Services Procurement be affirmed.

95. **Strategic Documents linked to the new 'Well Managed Highways Infrastructure' (WHMI) Code of Practice**

The Committee considered a report by the Cabinet member for Natural and Built Environment, Dorset County Council, which accompanied the submission of key documents which were linked to the new 'Well managed Highway Infrastructure' Code of Practice and that had recently been revised.

Members expressed gratitude to the highways officers for their hard work and the innovative ways of working which enabled faster, priority led maintenance and management.

Decision

That the amendments to the strategic documents be approved.

Reason for Decision

To ensure the authority had a robust risk-based approach to asset management, highway inspection and defect repair and winter service which met the requirements of the new code and criteria linked to incentivised funding.

96. **Exempt Business**

Decision

That in accordance with Section 100 A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the public from the meeting in relation to the business specified below it was likely that if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1, 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

97. **Shaping Dorset Council Programme - Contractual Terms and Conditions for New Employees**

The Committee considered an exempt report by the Lead Member for HR and Workforce in relation to the development of an agreed set of terms and conditions for new employees for Dorset Council from 1 April 2019, including the pay and grading structure and job evaluation scheme; holiday arrangements; any enhancements and allowances that would be applied; and any other contractual terms and conditions of employment.

Decision

1. That formal consultation commence with the joint trade unions on the basis of the proposals outlined in Appendix 1 of the Lead Member's report.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive (Designate) for Dorset Council, the Leader of the Shadow Council and Lead Member for HR & Workforce to flex the proposals as part of the ongoing consultation with the trade unions, if required, in order to reach agreement.
3. Should agreement not be reached in some or all areas that, following the disputes resolution process, the proposals be implemented without formal agreement with the unions.

Reason for Decisions

To enable recruitment of new employees for Dorset Council.

98. **Shaping Dorset Council Programme - Interim Voluntary Release Scheme**

The Committee considered an exempt report by the Lead Member for HR and Workforce on an interim Voluntary Release Scheme.

Recommended

To recommend to sovereign councils that a single process be implemented to manage and agree requests for Voluntary Redundancy for Dorset Council where those decisions are made before 1 April 2019, as outlined in the Lead Members' report.

Decisions

1. That Dorset Council applies redundancy multiplier arrangements as detailed in the Lead Member's report for all transferred staff.
2. That a redundancy multiplier for all new staff who join Dorset Council from 1 April 2019 be applied.

Reason for Decisions

Inclusion of a voluntary redundancy scheme would support meeting the budget requirements for 2019/20 and beyond.

99. **Former Weymouth and Portland Borough Council offices, North Quay, Weymouth**

(Note: At the beginning of the meeting Cllr Jeff Cant made a non-pecuniary declaration in relation this item. He remained in the meeting and took part in the debate.)

The Committee considered an exempt report by the Leader of Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (W&PBC) in respect of the former Borough Council offices at North Quay, Weymouth.

An outline of the history leading to the proposals within the report was provided by Cllr Jeff Cant, Leader of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. The report was considered and approved by the W&PBC Management Committee at its meeting held on 11 December 2018. Cross party support at the Borough Council was expressed for the decisions made by the Management Committee.

Decision

That the decisions of the W&PBC Management Committee be supported.

100. **Urgent Items**

There were no items of urgent business pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972 considered at the meeting.

Duration of meeting: 4.00 - 5.05 pm

Chairman

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Member Questions and Speakers

Question from Cllr Lucy Hamilton to the Leader of the Shadow Dorset Council in relation to the cost of setting up the new Dorset Council

Question

Firstly I'd like to recognise the extraordinary hard work of officers in working to a tight deadline and an even tighter budget. However, paragraph 2.2 states "there remains a risk that at this moment in time there is no clear way to set a balanced budget". Can I have an urgent update on the funds available from central government to go towards the complex work of reorganisation? Central government delays have made this whole process even more costly.

Answer

We have now received the provisional finance settlement which was in line with our assumptions and estimates. There are still a number of issues to be resolved but the Shadow Executive in February will receive proposals for a balanced budget for 2019/20.

A number of representations have been made jointly by the two unitary programmes to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government during the year about funding of some of the extraordinary costs of this process, especially in light of the government delays. There is clearly a reluctance for precedents to be set and we have not yet been given any indication that we might receive any one-off funding to help us.

The preferred route from MHCLG is for the use of the Capitalisation Directive which in essence allows us to capitalise the implementation costs and spread these over 20 years and we are actively pursuing this.

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