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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 APRIL 2021

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

Apologies: There were no apologies.

Also present: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Tony Alford, Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Kelvin Clayton, Cllr Jean Dunseith, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, 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 Carole Jones, Cllr Stella Jones, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Val Potheary, Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Roland Tarr, Cllr David Tooke, Cllr Daryl Turner and Cllr Kate Wheller

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), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Antony Littlechild (Community Energy Manager), Dave Thompson (Corporate Director for Property & Assets), John Newcombe (Service Manager, Licensing & Community Safety), Karyn Punchard (Corporate Director for Place Services), Paul Rutter (Service Manager for Leisure Services) and Deborah Smart (Corporate Director – Digital & Change)

112. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021 were confirmed and would be signed by the Chairman at a date in the future.

113. Declarations of Interest

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

114. Public Participation

There were 7 questions 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 detailed responses are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

115. Questions from Members

There were 4 questions received from Councillors. These along with the detailed responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes. *(Note: Cllr B Heatley withdrew his question at the meeting)*

116. Forward Plan

The draft Forward Plan for April to July 2021 was received and noted.

117. Capital Programme 2021/22

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy advised that in approving the 2021/22 budget on 16 February 2021, Dorset Council allocated £15m of new capital funding for specific projects that had not been prioritised at that stage.

The report asked members to note the current projects for 2021/22 and to note future expenditure. The Portfolio Holder reminded members that it had already approved significant capital expenditure on the St Mary's school site and he sought approval to pause any further release of funds at this stage.

It was proposed that a further review be carried out as part of the 2020/21 capital closedown process.

Decision

- (a) That the capital programme proposed by the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Group (CSAM) for the period 2021/22 to 2025/26 and beyond be noted and those projects scheduled to commence in 2021/22 be progressed;
- (b) That the impact on future capital budgets of the two approved projects, where there would be contractual commitments beyond 2021/22 be noted;
- (c) That any further release of funds be paused at this stage, given the commitment to the St Mary's school site.
- (d) That a further review be carried out as part of the 2020/21 capital closedown process.

Reason for decision

The budget process and timetable for 2021/22 was very tight and although a programme total was agreed, individual projects were not sufficiently developed and more time was needed to bring these investments forward.

118. Public Sector Decarbonisation

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property set out a report on grant funding received, totalling £19 million, for a Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and related Low Carbon Skills Fund. The report further sought the approval to proceed with the procurement exercise as the activity was over the £500k key decision threshold.

Decision

- (a) Cabinet agreed to begin procurement exercises that were required in relation to the £18.7m Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) grant; that comprises of individual procurement activity over the key decision threshold of £500k.
- (b) That following procurement, the further step of making any contract award be delegated to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the relevant portfolio holders.

Reason for the decision

Cabinet was required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more.

119. **Transfer of Pinemoor Allotments and Open Green Space to Weymouth Town Council**

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property sought approval for the land known as Pinemoor Allotments and Open Green Space to be transferred to Weymouth Town Council on a less than best consideration basis.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the land was within his local ward area, but confirmed that he had no personal interest in respect of the site.

Members were further advised that the transfer of the land required it to be used as allotments and open space.

Decision

- (i) That the appropriation of the land known as Pinemoor Allotments and Open Green Space from being held by Dorset Council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to being held under the Local Government Act 1972, be approved and
- (ii) That the disposal/transfer of the land at a disposal price of one pound (which is less than best consideration) to Weymouth Town Council on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director of Place, be approved.

Reason for the decision

To promote and assist in the delivery of the proposed allotments in accordance with the provisions of the Section 106 Agreement dated 22 May 2006, varied by a Deed dated 8 March 2012. Where there is a Town Council for an area, the responsibility for allotments lies with them.

120. **Extension of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Related Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's)**

The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services presented a report advising that the both the previous councils of West Dorset District Council (WDDC) and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council (WPBC) had Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) in place to ensure anti-social behaviour could be controlled and managed.

Dorset Council was now considering putting into place a county-wide approach to PSPO's and in the meantime the Portfolio Holder requested for a 12 month extension to the WDDC and WPBC existing orders. She further confirmed that any new order needed to be widely consulted upon before being put into place.

Decision

That the extension of the West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) related Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) to 22 April 2022 and 19 August 2022 respectively, be approved.

Reason for the decision

- (i) To comply with legislative requirements
- (ii) To ensure openness and transparency in the Council's decision making and to ensure that those persons affected by ASB continue to be afforded the protection provided by the Orders.

121. Dorset Council's Digital Vision

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change presented the Council's Digital Vision and action plan for adoption by the committee.

The creation of the document was the result of working with community partners, including the NHS, the voluntary sector, business community and staff consultation. There had also been extensive input for councillors through the ICT EAP and the Place and Resources Overview Committee.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Place and Resources Overview Committee had considered the final document and action plan and had recommended its approval.

Decision

That, subject to any final changes, the Dorset Council's Digital Vision and action plan be adopted.

Reasons for the decision

The Place and Resources committee met in December 2020 and February 2021 to finalise the digital vision and recommend areas of focus. The later have been pulled together and are reflected in the accompanying delivery plan. Subject to any typographical or minor changes, these documents have been recommended by that committee to Cabinet for adoption.

122. **Barbeques and other related fire activities options paper**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out a report on detailed options that address both the legislative as well as other alternatives available to control or prohibit barbeques and other fire related activities in the Dorset Council area. He advised that the paper set out a two-step approach including Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) as a method of formal control, but acknowledged that these take some time to put into place.

In response to a question in respect of widening the scope of the activities to include beaches. The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services advised that some of the beaches referred to were private and would not be covered by a PSPO. However she would continue to work with private landowners to support how they address some of these issues.

Decision

- (a) That a two-step approach be adopted to the control of disposable barbeques and other fire related activities firstly focussing on increasing public awareness about the risks and the wider impacts through campaigns, policies and schemes, then if necessary, introducing legislation which will result in penalties for those in contravention.
- (b) To achieve this the following options were approved:
 - (1) Not to pursue designating areas or Dorset Council areas with a PSPO relating to BBQ's and fire related activities this year but evaluate 2022 (Option 1)
 - (2) Not to pursue having a specific byelaw at this current time (Option 2)
 - (3) The Sky Lantern and Balloon Policy and the new BBQ and campfire/Wildfire Policy be adopted by Dorset Council (Option 3)
 - (4) Moors Valley to investigate the gas/electric communal style BBQ option with Forestry England later (Option 4)
 - (5) Officers be asked to investigate partnership funding options to support having a new Firewise voluntary warden scheme delivered through the Dorset Firewise project (Option 5)
 - (6) The campaign and communication work be supported and developed and taken forward for 2021 season in line with any recommendations from the report to Cabinet of 6 April 2021. (Option 6)
 - (7) Dorset Council initiate a coordinated approach to the banning of disposable BBQs in agreed high risk area's locations. This work should link with Option 3, 5 and 6 (Option 7).

Reason for Recommendation:

This two-step approach considered the cost, the length of time it takes to introduce new legislation and difficulties in enforcement as well as the effectiveness of various control methods. The recommended approach aims to balance the various options presented to Cabinet.

123. Dorset Council Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy

Decision (unanimous)

That the report be deferred until the next meeting of Cabinet on 18 May 2021.

Reason for the decision

To consider the comments and issues raised by the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee of 25 March 2021 and the (withdrawn) question received from Cllr B Heatley.

124. Dorchester Office Strategy

Cabinet considered a report on the rationalisation of the council's property asset for office accommodation in Dorchester following the reorganisation of local government in Dorset. A number of options had been considered by officers and the changes in technology and access to information were also taken into account.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property advised that the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the Cabinet report at its meeting of 25 March 2021 and had made the following recommendations:

1. Agree to the principle of consolidating the Council's office requirements on the County Hall/Colliton Park site as a 'public service civic hub' subject to the Council ensuring that it takes due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010
2. Agree to the principle of utilising any surplus space within the County Hall/Colliton Park site for use by third sector and other public sector bodies and to review the possibility to repurpose and refurbish any such assets currently leased to and in use by them for residential purpose or for disposal
3. Agree to retain the Library facility in South Walks House with a Customer Access Point
4. Reaffirms the principle that we are a member-led authority and that local Members should always be consulted on issues affecting their Wards.
5. Agree to the Council seeking planning permission to repurpose South Walks House and South Annexe for residential use through a process of refurbishing or redeveloping the existing buildings whilst retaining the Library facility in South Walks House and a Customer Access

Point.

The Portfolio Holder proposed the above recommendations for approval with the following addition set out as 6 below. Recommendations 1 to 6 were also seconded by Cllr J Haynes.

6. Agree to the Council, whilst planning consent is being sought for the repurposing of South Walks House and South Annexe for residential use, to continue to explore and investigate alternative uses so as to ensure that the Council achieves best commercial (including hotel use), social and economic value prior to bringing forward the final recommendation to Cabinet for approval as to future use.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that:-

- Local ward Councillors would be kept fully informed of progress;
- The use for government offices was explored with no success;
- When the final recommendations report comes forward it would be made available to Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee before being considered by Cabinet for approval.

Upon being put to the vote recommendations 1-6 were approved.

Decision (unanimous)

- (a) That the principle of consolidating the Council's office requirements on the County Hall/Colliton Park site as a 'public service civic hub' subject to the Council ensuring it takes due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, be agreed;
- (b) That the principle of utilizing any surplus space within the County Hall/Colliton Park site for use by third sector and other public sector bodies be agreed and to review the possibility to repurpose and refurbish any such assets currently leased to and in use by them for residential purpose or for disposal;
- (c) Agree to retain the Library facility in South Walks House with a Customer Access Point;
- (d) That Cabinet reaffirms the principle that we are a member led authority and that local Members should always be consulted on issues affecting their Wards;
- (e) That planning permission be sought to repurpose South Walks House and South Annexe for residential use through a process of refurbishing or redeveloping the existing buildings whilst retaining the Library facility in South Walks House and a Customer Access point;
- (f) Agree to the Council, whilst planning consent is being sought for the repurposing of South Walks House and South Annexe for residential use, to continue to explore and investigate alternative uses so as to ensure that the Council achieves best commercial (including hotel use), social and

economic value prior to bringing forward the final recommendation to Cabinet for approval as to future use.

Reason for the decision

The effective use of the asset base will help enable the Council to meet its social and financial challenges through asset disposals, generation of capital receipts, savings in costs through the reduction, rationalisation and improved efficiency of the estate and more importantly the generation of value through income generation and the repurposing, redirecting and reuse of land and buildings for housing, schools and other essential service needs.

125. Update(s) on Policy Development Matters referred to an Overview Committee for Consideration

There were no referred matters to report.

126. Portfolio Holder - Lead Member(s) Update Summary

The Chairman invited Cllr A Parry the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Years to address the committee. He verbally updated members on the following:

- That he had met with Bridport Area members to informally discuss matters relating to Children & Education in their area. This has proved a good way to understand very local issues and Lead Members are active in following up these matters.
- Also met with Portland Members to discuss way forward for strengthening Youth Provision, on the Isle.
- All Dorset Schools welcomed pupils back into a classroom setting. The attendance rating reported, has been excellent.
- Lead Members have been in attendance and provided support for Portfolio Holder at a range of events including Schools Forum.
- The Portfolio Holder invited Cllr Jane Somper to update members on her role as the Lead member for Safe Guarding.

This and the other available written portfolio holder reports are attached to these minutes as Appendix 3.

127. Climate & Ecological Emergency Executive Advisory Panel Update

There was no update to report.

128. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

129. **Exempt Business**

It was proposed by Councillor P Wharf seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following 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

130. **Leisure Services Future management Arrangements**

The Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services presented a report on future management arrangements for Leisure Services.

Decision

That a public consultation be undertaken to consider the implications of an alternative operating arrangement for the management agreement of Leisure Services and a report be brought back to Cabinet in the summer for consideration.

Reason for the decision

To consider Leisure Services future management arrangements and ensure this provides value for money.

131. **Letting of the Sherborne Hotel, Weymouth**

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property presented a report on the letting arrangement for the Sherborne Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset.

Decision

That Cabinet authorise the letting of The Sherborne Hotel, 116 The Esplanade, Weymouth on term to be agreed by the Executive Director of Place.

Reason for the decision

To bring the hotel back into service and enable the provision of good quality hotel and guest house provision in Weymouth. To help support and assist the local economy.

132. **Transfer of Pinemoor Allotments and Open Green Space to Weymouth Town Council - exempt appendix C**

An exempt appendix associated with the report 'Transfer of Pinemoor Allotments and Open Green Space to Weymouth Town Council' was made available to

members. However, cabinet did not move into exempt business in order to discuss the information at the meeting.

133. Dorchester Office Strategy - exempt appendices 2, 4 to 8

The exempt appendices associated with the report 'Dorchester Office Strategy' had been made available to Cabinet. However, Cabinet did not move into exempt business in order to discuss the confidential information at the meeting.

Appendix 1 - Public Participation Q&A's

Appendix 2 Councillor Q&A's

Appendix 3 - Portfolio Holder Update Summary - April 2021

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.43 am

Chairman

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Cabinet of 6 April 2021

Public Questions

1. Question from Mike Allen

I am concerned about how Dorset Council intend to process the comments they have received in reply to the Draft Local Plan Consultation.

In particular, it is important that members of the public are able to see the full range of comments without undue hindrance, but DC's Statement of Community Involvement has only this to say:

"All comments received in response to a consultation will be considered. A consultation report summarising comments and a response to the issues raised will be made available on the Local Plan web pages."

A summary alone will not enable the public to see all the comments, nor will a list of them suffice, because there will be so many. I suggest they ought to be stored in a **searchable online database** (a spreadsheet for instance) so that anyone can see easily what others have said about each policy or paragraph in the Plan. Collating the responses in this way will lead to observers being able to relate meaningfully the Council's response to those comments to the comments themselves.

With this in mind I would like to ask a question please of the Cabinet regarding the involvement of local communities in drafting the Local Plan:

Question:

If the Council do not store the comments received about each policy and paragraph in a searchable database accessible to the public, how can the public be certain that the Council's responses have taken reasonable regard of all the comments received?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

We will be publishing all of the responses received, in a searchable database as suggested, though this will not be immediately available as we need to input all the responses, redact personal information and check for any potentially offensive material. We will also, later on, publish a summary of the comments with responses to all the main issues raised, as stated in the Statement of Community Involvement.

2. Question from William Kenealy

1. Why has the portfolio holder made repeated political statements to the press and still not replied individually to the questions and over 20 e-mails sent in to the October cabinet meeting by residents, local organisations and the Parish Council in respect of works in Dinah's Hollow as stated in the meeting minutes?

2. Why has the portfolio holder ignored requests to meet the Parish Council and residents to address their concerns about the proposed Dinah's Hollow works and the poor traffic management in the village?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The Portfolio Holder was asked by Dorset Council Communication team for a statement, which was part of a press release regarding Dinah's Hollow Project. The purpose of the press release was to make Local Parish Councils and members of the public aware the project was going to be included in the next Cabinet meeting on 6th April 2021.

The emails Mr Kenealy refers to would be related to the Cabinet Meeting on 6th October 2020. Unfortunately, only 2 questions from Linda Nunn, Director, Cranborne Chase AONB and Mr Richard Burden were received before the deadline for submission and therefore they were the only 2 questions included to the pre questions list. Any remaining emails with comments or questions regarding Dinah's Hollow project were received too late for submission. An acknowledgment receipt was sent, advising them that the deadline had past and that their question/statement will not be heard as part of the meeting.

However, officers did reply to the emails that were forwarded to them. If any responses are outstanding, please resend the emails and answers will be given.

[There will be a link available in the written response that gives information as to how a member of public can get involved in the committee meeting.](#)

I received a request from Cllr Jane Somper in August 2020 for a meeting with a number of Parish Councils.

Having searched my email's I cannot find any other requests. Could the writer of the question please give me details of requests?

I asked officers for a review of Dorset Council position at that time on risk and liabilities.

I have been waiting for papers to come to Cabinet for approval.

The work now begins subject to Cabinet approval and as soon as I am out of lockdown will be happy to meet with interested parties to discuss plans and options.

We need to deal with Dinah's Hollow.

3. Question from Mary Calvert

1. The piecemeal use of consultants with a Finance rather than a need led assessment has resulted in hasty proposals that are likely to prove unwise and unrealistic in the long run. In particular, it is doubtful that South Walks House will attract a developer with 30% affordable housing in one building. It would seem advisable to keep the option of a hotel on the table since the Council has already been approached.

Will the Council commit to 30% affordable housing in South Walks House even if this may make the development uneconomic for a developer; and has the Council got a plan B?

2. Dorset Councils (past and present) have failed over decades to ensure the provision of disabled access at either station in Dorchester. It is therefore essential that access is given sufficient attention as part of the current rationalisation and consolidation exercise. This is particularly relevant at the County Hall/Colliton Park site which is to be a “public service civic hub” having due regard to the Equality Act 2010.

Which community interest company established by disabled people, older people and carers is the Dorset Council commissioning to undertake the fresh series of Access Audits (as reported to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee), what are the terms of reference of the Access Audits and how can Dorchester residents get involved?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property

Question 1

In November 2020 the Cabinet endorsed the Property Strategy & Asset Management Plan. The strategy set out that unless there was little or no benefit associated with redevelopment the Council should undertake a viability assessment and at that point prior to making a decision either to dispose or redevelop an asset will decide whether to seek outline or full planning permission. The adoption of such an approach would allow the Council to exert greater influence over a development in terms of timescales, tenure, affordable content and environmental impact.

The allocation of affordable housing within development is governed by Dorset Council’s policy. Any schemes brought forward will be compliant with those policies, including the affordable housing component. We are confident that viable schemes are available for the site including the affordable component.

Throughout the timescales associated with obtaining the necessary planning consent for residential conversion we are intending to continue to further investigate all options with regard to the site (including that of a hotel) in order to ensure that we achieve the best commercial, social and economic outcome before bringing a final recommendation to Cabinet for approval with regard to future use.

Question 2

The Council currently complies with the 2010 Equality Act and has met all reasonable requirements in accordance with the legislation.

As per the response provided to a similar question raised prior to the Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee and as detailed within the draft EqIA as provided at Appendix 1 of the Cabinet report the Council has commissioned DOTS Disability to

undertake a further programme of independent access audits on its behalf. DOTS is a community interest company and is the social enterprise arm of the charity Access Dorset. They have previously undertaken work for Dorset Council, BCP, NHS Dorset, Aster and Magna Housing amongst others.

The Access Audit will provide an assessment of a building against best practice standards in order to benchmark its accessibility to disabled people. The Audit will assess what actions are necessary and reasonable for the Council to undertake as required by the Equality Act 2010 setting out clear recommendations and priority ratings in order for the Council to plan and budget for any necessary adjustive works.

We would expect the audits to cover all elements of our buildings and its environment following the 'journey' of a disabled user and typically will cover:-

- Approach and car parking
- Entrances
- Receptions
- Horizontal circulation-corridors
- Lifts and stairs
- Internal doors
- Toilets
- Signage and wayfinding
- Communication
- Means of escape for disabled people

There are usually many other site specific elements which will arise and be covered as part of an audit.

Dorchester residents are involved everyday through using our buildings and facilities and as such can comment or complain about any particular aspect whereby they feel that the Council is not complying with or failing to meet the legislation. As a Council we are duty bound to investigate any such complaint, respond accordingly and where necessary make reasonable adjustments.

Through the twin track approach of proactive auditing and resident/customer interaction the Council can ensure it has taken all reasonable steps to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

4. Question from John Calvert

As a Dorchester resident I am concerned at the detrimental effects on location of staff, resulting location of services and access to those services of the recommendations in the Dorset Office Strategy report in item 14.

I note that the report is provided by the Director of Property and Assets and was initially sent to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee. It is not then surprising that the implications are given as Finance, then Climate then other. It was admitted at that meeting that the actual numbers and location of staff was fluid. However counting numbers of desks was seen as key to the recommendations.

Where is located Dorset Council's vision for the services needed by its residents and visitors and the organisation of staff to provide those services? Shouldn't that come first before a narrow accounting examination of office space?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Customer and Community Services

The covid pandemic has brought about many changes to our way of working and we hope to keep the positive ideas moving forward. We know that there are some occasions when it is important that members of the public meet with us on a face to face basis. We want to support the public by trying to ensure that their queries are resolved at the first point of contact. We are looking to build this into our customer access strategy which we are progressing.

Within Dorchester the Council is proposing to relocate its customer service access point, supported by customer services staff into our library and learning centre which will remain located at the west end of the South Walks House building. Access to all services are already available within the library space through free access to library computers and Wi-Fi. Our future provision will include support for customers to access council services digitally, as well as in person, through a general enquiry helpdesk. We are also planning for the provision of confidential and semi-confidential spaces to discuss sensitive matters preferably with an appointment.

Our digital vision for Dorset Council is included in our cabinet papers which provides a strategy and plan for improving our digital offer and supporting residents to go online. Our recent resident survey provided data that tells us that over 86% of residents use the internet for accessing services and 37% of residents prefer to use the telephone to contact the Council. Our vision is for Dorset Council to be a digital council, supported by essential access to telephone services. Our 'in person' services will be delivered within trusted community spaces, for example, our libraries.

One certainty in the future provision of services is that they will continue to change, forever. There is no point at which the future will be known and planned. We must progress on the numerous decisions we make with the knowledge we have at that point.

5. Question from Pete West Secretary Dorset Community Energy

The council clearly understands the importance of reducing net CO2 emissions to zero as quickly as possible through your declaration of a Climate and Ecological Climate in 2019. The only realistic way to achieve this for Dorset as a whole is through an offshore wind power scheme on the scale of the previously proposed Navitus Bay project, which would decarbonise the total electricity consumption of Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole at no cost to the council and create hundreds of new local jobs. However there was almost no mention of offshore wind Power in Dorset Council's recent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy document.

Does the council recognise the importance of an offshore wind scheme to meeting Dorset's targets for net emissions and that public opinion has changed a lot since the previous Navitus Bay scheme was rejected ? Would the council be prepared to

support a new proposal for an offshore wind farm sited 9-18 miles off the coast of Dorset ?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The Dorset Council climate and economical emergency strategy (pg 25-26) highlights the challenges and opportunities for renewable energy in the County. It notes the need for large Giga Watt scale renewable energy deployment to achieve the 8 fold increase in renewable energy capacity required to meet the energy needs of the whole County.

Dorset Council cannot deploy the Giga Watts of renewable energy required at this scale and does not have control of national planning policy or economics of renewable energy. Any future proposal that was to come forward for a large scale off shore wind project would be a planning matter decide by the Secretary of State due to its national significance and Dorset Council would only be one of many statutory consultees to the planning application.

However, in recognition of the role such a project could play in helping Dorset meet its Carbon Neutral ambitions the strategy identifies a specific action to lobby government over the major hurdles for renewable energy deployment, the Navitus Bay decision and grid infrastructure.

6. Question from Helen Sumblor

The CEE Strategy Making it Happen Section, under Engagement and Communications, states "Through our initial call for ideas, Dorset residents told us they wanted Dorset Council to help with understanding climate change and the steps that can be taken to tackle it", and in addition, at the recent CEE Strategy Consultation People's Assemblies, one of the consistent themes from the public was a request for information about action to take to address climate change. With this in mind, will Dorset Council fund the Sustainable Dorset Green Living Project, (<https://www.sustainabledorset.org/discover-greener-living/>) for 2021, to continue to give households the tools and information, in the form of the project work books, to help them minimise their carbon footprint?

For those households who prefer an online interactive tool, will Dorset Council investigate if Giki Zero (GIKI = Get Informed, Know your Impact, <https://zero.giki.earth>), as used by Norfolk Association of Local Councils as part of their Well-Being initiative, might provide guidance on steps to tackle climate change and if so whether, in order to explore the Dorset County footprint beyond the data provided by Central Government, the Council would consider funding the Giki Zero Pro version for all interested households on a trial basis?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

The Making it Happen section of the climate and ecological strategy (pgs 57-60) highlights the need to improve awareness and engagement of staff and the public on

the issues of climate change and behavior change and sets out a number of methods the Council will be employing to do this.

As part of the ongoing development of a wider communication strategy we will be exploring the range of online tools, such as Giki Zero, as well as opportunities for working more closely with range of partners to engage and communicate with residents.

7. Question Professor Michael Dower and the Dorset Climate Action Network (DCAN)

The draft Local Plan proposes to provide land for more than 39,000 new houses between now and 2038. This number is based on use of the Government's 'Standard Method' for assessing housing, and includes about 9,000 houses to meet unmet need which may be requested by neighbouring authorities. Councillor David Walsh has stated that the Standard Method is "set in stone by the government" and cannot be altered; and that any challenge to that method would fail because the draft Local Plan shows that sites can be found for that large number of houses.

What Councillor Walsh did not mention is :

1. The only way that sites for more than about 20,000 houses can be found is by making large encroachment on the AONB, breaching the Green Belt and using large areas of greenfield land, all of which are against government policy.
2. The Sustainability Assessment in the Local Plan shows that almost all new sites proposed for housing or workspace would, if developed, cause grave damage to landscape and to biodiversity and would gravely impede the Council's own Climate Strategy to cut greenhouse gas emissions.
3. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework states very plainly (paragraph 60) that the standard method is not 'set in stone'; and that a planning authority can use a different method if "exceptional circumstances" apply.
4. The Local Plan provides ample evidence, in Section 1, to justify a claim of 'exceptional circumstances' based on the uniquely rich heritage of the county in landscape, natural habitats, heritage coast and historic towns; the exceptional overlapping density of global, European, national and local designations which protect that heritage; the Green Belt on the west side of BCP conurbation; and traffic congestion & pressures on infrastructure in Central & South East Dorset.
5. Government guidance also clearly states that calculations of housing need should not be used to justify building houses on greenfield sites in the AONB or the Green Belt (National Planning Policy Framework paras 136-137).
6. There is no obligation on Dorset Council to meet unmet need for housing from a neighbouring authority. The 'duty to co-operate' on this was withdrawn in 2018. Moreover, no neighbouring authority has submitted such a request.
7. The Council's main duty is to ensure that local needs for housing, including truly affordable homes, can be met. This points towards a total of about 20,000 new homes over the 17 year period, which can be accommodated without the damage that we describe.

In view of these points, will the Council think again, cut its new homes target from 39,000 to 20,000, and save the county from the impact of a serious and un-necessary over-estimate of housing need?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Planning

The council will consider all the consultation responses received, before making any decisions about what should be included in the next stage of the plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires councils to use the standard methodology for identifying local housing need, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals. We cannot therefore plan only for 'local need' and currently do not believe that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an alternative approach, though we will of course consider the matter during our assessment of all the consultation responses. Whether that need (including any unmet need from neighbouring areas) can be met within the environmental constraints of the plan area is a different matter, which will also be considered carefully.

It is not the case that the 'duty to cooperate' in relation to housing numbers from adjoining areas has been withdrawn. The latest, 2019 version of the National Planning Policy Framework says in paragraph 60 that 'in addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met in neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for'.

In relation to requests from other authorities, the consultation response from BCP Council states that they have a significant and challenging housing requirement, though they have not yet quantified the extent to which they will be unable to meet it. They refer to the need for continued dialogue with Dorset Council on this key strategic matter, and for the Statement of Common Ground between the two councils to consider the distribution of housing need across the wider area.

8. Question from Dr Sandra Reeve

Capital Programme 2021/2022 report

Paragraph 10.2, in the background to recommendations, makes clear that the Capital Strategy & Asset Management Group does not require bids to meet any specific environmental standards.

Within the current evaluation framework 'Clear Environmental Benefit' is just one of seven criteria that can be selected for any particular bid. A bid only needs to satisfy one criterion, which means that proposals can be environmentally unsound.

In the light of the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) declared by Dorset Council, does Cabinet agree that *all* bids for funding should be required to meet this 'Clear Environmental Benefit' criterion?

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

No. Dorset Council allocates capital spending in many different areas ranging from IT to highways, from Harbour dredging through to household recycling centres. This means that every scheme has to be assessed on its individual merits. Whilst we would not be looking to invest in environmentally unsound projects, there may be occasions where essential capital spend is required that does not have a clear environmental benefit.

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Councillor Questions for Cabinet 6 April 2021

Question from Councillor Paul Kimber

I would like to request how many social houses are to be built in Dorset during the next 12 months and what areas will they will be built.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety

We are currently predicting 300 new affordable homes to be built in the Dorset Council area in 2021/22. This number could increase during the year, with up to an additional 200 homes under way during this period. Due to current challenges facing the building industry we are remaining cautious in predicting how many of those additional 200 homes will be built during the next twelve months, but we expect to have 500 new affordable homes within this current pipeline. Dorset Council will continue to work with developers, registered provider housing associations and communities to increase the amount of affordable homes built for local people. Several affordable housing schemes have recently been approved by Planning Committee, but some of these will not complete until after next year.

The new affordable homes will complete across the area with several of the larger towns having homes delivered on open market sites. These areas include Chickerell, Littlemoor, Swanage, Verwood, Wimborne, Shaftesbury, Dorchester and Weymouth.

Some affordable housing developments worth noting are –

Bridport Cohousing – 46 affordable homes under construction

Flaxfield Rise, Beaminster – Magna are delivering an all affordable site of 30 homes
Clipper Tea site, Beaminster – Aster will continue development of this all affordable site

Stone Lane, Holwell – Stonewater are completing a 14 home rural exception site

Spyway Orchard, Langton Matravers – Aster are developing 28 affordable homes

Thornhill Road, Stalbridge – A 60 home all affordable scheme being developed by Sovereign

Question from Cllr Sherry Jespersen

The work to stabilise the slopes at Dinah's Hollow, proposed in the Capital Programme 2021/22, will necessitate the closure of the C13 for a period of some months. Traffic will be diverted on to the A350. Past experience has shown that this will have a very severe impact on the residents living along the A350 and in nearby villages; to road users and to the structure of the road itself.

Can I ask for assurance that every measure will be taken to mitigate the impact of this road closure and that a clear communications strategy will be put in place to keep everyone informed; and that these measures have been allowed for within the budget?

Can I also ask for assurance that the existing advisory one-way system for HGVs (A350 northbound/C13 southbound) will be reinstated as soon as possible once the work in Dinah's Hollow is completed.

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

During the C13 closure, the diversion route will be signed via A350 and additional advisory signs regarding the unsuitability of other routes will be provided.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to prevent traffic using other routes due to the need for access. The condition and use of local routes will be monitored throughout the project.

Communication to all Local Members, affected Local Parish Councils and members of the public about the project and during the works, will be in place. This will be relayed in a timely manner to allow full consultation and processes to take place. Officers will report to Local Members, Local Parish Councils and residents on the progress being made at every stage.

The budget for the Improvement works includes Democratic and communication process for the entirety of the project.

Dorset Highways can reassure Cllrs that the current advisory one-way system for HGVs (A350 and C13) will remain after the works are complete.

Question from Councillor Jane Somper

While I support that Dorset Council must take all measures to protect road users who drive through Dinah's Hollow, my questions to the Portfolio Holder and officers are:

Although some of the trees will be retained and planting holes created for replacements there will still be a reduction in vegetation. Have you identified other areas where trees could be planted to mitigate the harm to the environment by the loss of this vegetation?

Can you confirm when the works are likely to begin and how long this is estimated to take.

The report implies the bulk of work will be carried out 22/23 but is not clear? Have all the background reports been made publicly available and if not could I ask that they should be?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

No other areas have been identified for additional planting Nevertheless, as part of the underpinning, more light will find the floor of the woodland and this will stimulate growth from the dormant seed bank, creating a more diverse habitat. The reduction in vegetation will be temporary.

All the planning documents related to the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) application (including Environmental Impact Assessment) are also available to the public and can be found on the North Dorset planning portal Planning application:

[2/2015/1677/TPTREE](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning/2/2015/1677/TPTREE) - [dorsetforyou.com \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) As stated in the 6

October report to cabinet, the TPO application is from several years ago and its validity has lapsed due to the works having been put on hold. Therefore, it will need to be updated prior to any works commencing.

The works are likely to take around seven months to complete. It is not possible to give a date when the works will start at this stage. Land will need to be acquired and this may require compulsory purchase. The start date is governed by environment considerations. The removal of vegetation is best undertaken in January/ February before the bird nesting season and ground works are best undertaken in Spring / Summer as the ground dries out.

The background papers are in the Dinah's Hollow Project Report published on Dorset Council Website and available for access by the public. The report can be read at Point 25 on the agenda in the Cabinet papers 06 October 2020. [Agenda for Dorset Council - Cabinet on Tuesday, 6th October, 2020, 10.00 am - Dorset Council](#)

The report lists the steps that have to be done and reviewed before we get to construction as follows:

- Ecological studies (protected species including badgers)
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA)
- Tree surveys (trees protected by woodland tree preservation order)
- Tree Preservation Order (previous consent to fell protected trees granted on 02 February 2016 has expired)
- Geotechnical design (review previous work against current best practice for soil nailing and current site conditions)
- Land purchase of West Bank (by agreement or compulsory purchase)
- Planning requirements (planning consent not required by previous planning authority)

Question from Councillor Gill Taylor

I appreciate that this paper was before P&RS recently but I have a number of questions which were not fully answered there and I would like to explore further regarding office space required by our staff and where these offices are located. This is a fundamental requirement before we decide the future of our office accommodation in any location, not just Dorchester. Without this information it is not possible to make sound decisions.

I also appreciate that some office based staff already have desk space across the county and many do not require desk space however there is a need for more staff to be based closer to the communities they live in and work for. I am arguing for Weymouth as a Weymouth Councillor on the basis that 20% of the population of rural Dorset live in Weymouth and hence I would expect at least 20% of DC office space to be located here; others may wish to present the cases for their areas. I would request that a proportion of officers are based in Weymouth for the following reasons:

- To have office space, where required, closer to where our staff live is better for the work life balance of our staff.

- To demonstrate our commitment to reducing staff mileage in addition to that saved by working from home and thus address our commitment to reducing CO2 emissions.
- To support the economy of our conurbations. If DC locate offices to Weymouth it demonstrates a commitment by this council to employment in this area and serves to encourage other businesses to set up / relocate. This also takes into account that not too many years ago the council was a major, highly valued employer in the town.

I was told that there are plans being worked on to evaluate the office locations of all our staff. Without this information this paper is short sighted and does not consider the whole picture.

Please can you tell me when a complete plan for our office location will be available for scrutiny which must include the relocation of office space to Weymouth?

Can you also confirm that an evaluation of the office space required in Dorchester has been undertaken with a view to future office space relocation out of Dorchester?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets & Property

The Cabinet paper focuses on the Dorchester Office estate where the Council has its highest number of offices and an immediate priority to rationalise the office accommodation within the town where the Council has identified that it not only has surplus office space but space which is high cost.

The Office strategy is geared to rationalising and consolidating the estate, making the best of what we have, operating more efficiently and effectively whilst not looking, particularly in the current climate, to make further investment in office type accommodation.

The Council's future office estate is influenced by:-

- Children's, Adult's and Housing 'blueprints' for future office accommodation to support staff to serve their local communities.
- The Asset Management Plan
- Dorset Workplace

And informed by:-

- Hive surveys
- Employee Forum Workshops
- Meetings with Senior Managers.

The implementation of the Dorset Workplace and increased agile/flexible working with further opportunities for home working will reduce the office demand which has been reflected in the proposal to rationalise and consolidate the Dorchester Office base and the creation of a public service hub at County Hall for not only Council staff but for other public and third sector employees.

We are projecting that, in particular, we will require a reduced desk requirement for Council staff of somewhere between 800-1000 desks within Dorchester in the future and c180 desk spaces within Weymouth (which are already in place and we believe will meet future need).

Over the next 12 months the Council will look to further rationalise its office estate further and locate its main offices in key locations, where in the main it has an existing presence and is best placed to meet Service requirements.

As such whilst a number of central and local functions will continue to be based and operate from County Hall the numbers travelling to and being located within the office will reduce (and that together with staff being offered the opportunity to work from home and more locally will result in reduced mileage, travel time together with associated environmental benefits) without a requirement to create more office space elsewhere and physically relocate staff.

The Council will continue to review the utilisation of County Hall, seek to share space with other public and third sector partners and to consider its options for the future.

A Member Seminar is being held on the 26th April to look at the work being progressed around the Dorset Workplace and Culture which will enable Councillors to get a better understanding of how we are looking to support employees in working more flexibly and how this work aligns with our Asset Strategy.

Question from Councillor Brian Heatley

Withdrawn by Cllr Heatley at the meeting

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:	Adult Social Care
CABINET DATE:	April 6 th 2021
KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT:	<p>Main focus has been in the following area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Carers strategy and identification of unknown unpaid carers • Issues regarding Tricuro contract and new potential delivery options • Continuing progress on Day Services transformation into Day Opportunities building on the embedded changes due to Covid
DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE:	None
ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES FOR NEXT PERIOD:	<p>Significant progress on the Adults Transformation programme will result in potentially 3 cabinet papers in June.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Framework for Adults Social Care including Housing and Children Service • Potentially Tricuro changes • Potentially the Encompass contract

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:	Children, Education, Skills & Early Help
CABINET DATE:	6.4.2021
KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT:	<p>Meeting with Bridport Area members to informally discuss matters relating to Children & Education in their area. This has proved a good way to understand very local issues and Lead Members are active in following up these matters.</p> <p>Meeting with Portland Members to discuss way forward for strengthening Youth Provision, on the Isle.</p> <p>All Dorset Schools welcomed pupils back into a classroom setting. The attendance rating reported, has been excellent.</p> <p>Lead Members have been in attendance and provided support for Portfolio Holder at a range of events including Schools Forum.</p>
DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE:	Youth Club Grants – More than £70k between 13 Clubs was approved in the 2020/21 financial Year.
ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES FOR NEXT PERIOD:	<p>We will continue to roll out our informal cluster area meetings with members with the next one scheduled this month for the Sherborne Area.</p> <p>A meeting with The Dorchester Youth Club re: listed building maintenance work.</p> <p>Strengthening Services Board, SW Area Lead members & Aspire Management board.</p> <p>Work continues in the area of SEND sufficiency.</p>

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:

Customer and Community Services

CABINET DATE:

6th April 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT:

- Started work on new library strategy.
- Joint Archives service review and Board.
- Follow on work with Place Overview on policy reviews coming from the Apse Waste Report.
- Draft Protocol on working with Town and Parish Councils.
- Preliminary work and timeline for strategy of our Customer services post Covid
- Continued work on getting the last 3 TIC's out into the community
- Continuing work on Draft cultural strategy
- Continuing work on sourcing a new site for an East Dorset HRC
- Looking to make a booking process on-line for HRC's particularly in Wimborne to stop queues and congestion

DELEGATED DECISIONS MADE:

Award of grants from the Leisure Development fund

ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES FOR NEXT PERIOD:

- Draft strategy on disposal of small assets to Town and Parishes to Overview.
- Continued work on the strategies above and fixing dates for overview.
- Starting work on Leisure Services review.
- Looking to move all grant awards into central location.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER/LEAD MEMBER UPDATE SUMMARY

PORTFOLIO:

Highways, Travel & Environment

CABINET DATE:

6th April 2021

KEY ACTIVITIES SINCE THE LAST REPORT:

Ongoing discussions on public transport provision. (Morebus & Damory) including Responsive Transport in Dorset. VIA technology demonstration. Meeting with Head of Highways works for the future.

Meeting of board of Western Gateway STB

Meeting of the de-carbonisation Board (What why and how)

Meeting to discuss the unlocking ready for tourism. Planning

Leadership performance Board (No red areas to report)

Finalising details for the stakeholder meeting to discuss Phase 2 of the car park review. Updating members on phase 2

Dorset operational group catchup (Jack and Matthew)

Decarbonisation Project Group (Officer meeting)

Weymouth Quay Regeneration update meeting.

Dorset LNP annual forum

Meeting with MP's re Highways.

Weymouth Harbour & Esplanade Strategic Outline Case.

Launch of EV charging stations (photo shoot and press release)

Meeting with Compton Abbas Airfield Group (incl Parish input)

Dorset LNP board meeting

Meeting of Dorset Pension Fund Board.

Highways and Transport Board Task & finish group.

Monthly update with John Sellgren to discuss strategy for the future

Fortnightly meetings with lead members to update and set new objectives.

Discussions on where we are with Custom House Quay Developments.

Meeting in support of Swanage Railway.

Lulworth/Durdle Door planning and consultation group.

G&T service briefing.

DELEGATED DECISIONS
MADE:

Discussion with Off shore windfarm specialist.
Meeting with Chief Superintendent Steve Lyne
Transforming Cities CGB meeting to discuss plan
for the future.
Summer visiting planning.
Work is on going as we seek funds for a change in
the way we deal with public transport.

Public Sector decarbonisation Scheme

ANTICIPATED
ACTIVITIES/MILESTONES
FOR NEXT PERIOD:

Public transport.
Preventive maintenance highways provision.
Grant funding for CC&E emergency sought.
Harbour safe working.
More EV connections.
Further meetings with Central Government for help
on funding of Public Transport
More involvement with fleet replacement and going
over to clean power.

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