

DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 MAY 2021

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

Apologies: Cllrs David Taylor and Bill Trite

Also present:

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place), Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Fiona King (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

Councillor M Parkes in the Chair

1. Election of Chairman

It was proposed by P Batstone seconded by T Coombs that V Potheary be elected Chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

It was proposed by P Kimber seconded by L O'Leary that P Kimber be elected Chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

Decision

That V Potheary be elected Chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

The Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office and thanked the Council for supporting her.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

It was proposed by V Potheary seconded by R Bryan that M Parkes be elected Vice-chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

It was proposed by N Ireland seconded by G Taylor that H Legg be elected Vice-chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

Decision

That M Parkes be elected Vice-chairman of Dorset Council until the Annual Meeting of Council in May 2022.

The Vice-chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office and thanked Council for their support.

3. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from D Taylor.

4. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a correct record.

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Chairman's Announcements

There were no announcements from the Chairman of Council.

7. Election of Leader of Council

It was proposed by P Wharf seconded by A Parry that S Flower be elected Leader of the Council for 2021/22.

There were no other nominations.

Decision

That S Flower be elected Leader of the Council for 2021/22.

The Leader thanked councillors for their support, made reference to progress made by the Council and further work to be undertaken and acknowledged the challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

8. Appointment of Deputy Leader of Council, Cabinet/Portfolio Holders and Lead Members

The Leader of the Council reported the appointment of the Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and Lead Members as follows:-

Spencer Flower	Leader / Governance, Performance and Communications
Peter Wharf	Deputy Leader / Corporate Development and Change
Gary Suttle	Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy
Ray Bryan	Highways, Travel and Environment
Tony Ferrari	Economic Growth, Assets and Property
David Walsh	Planning
Jill Haynes	Customer and Community Services
Andrew Parry	Children, Education, Skills and Early Help
Laura Miller	Adult Social Care and Health
Graham Carr-Jones	Housing and Community Safety
Byron Quayle	Lead Member for Education
Jane Somper	Lead Member for Safeguarding
Piers Brown	Lead Member for Health
Simon Gibson	Lead Member for Care
Noc Lacey-Clarke	Lead Member for Environment, Travel and Harbours
Cherry Brooks	Lead member for Highways

9. Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

There were no announcements from the Leader of Council or portfolio holders.

10. Public Participation - Questions and Statements

One question had been received from a member of the public but had been subsequently withdrawn.

11. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions or deputations.

12. Questions from Councillors

Questions put by councillors to the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders are attached to these minutes at Appendix 1, together with the responses.

13. Appointments to Committees, Joint Committees and Appointment of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen

The Council considered a report on the appointment to Committees, Joint Committees, Panels and the election of Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for 2021/22.

The nominations to committees from the Political Group Leaders had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting. It was proposed by S Flower and seconded by N Ireland that all the recommendations be approved.

Decision

- (a) That the allocation of committee seats and the appointments to committees and joint committees, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2021/22.
- (b) That delegated authority be given to Political Group Leaders to make in-year changes to committee appointments.
- (c) That the nominations for committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for 2021/22 be approved.

Reason for Decision

To comply with Dorset Council's Procedural Rules (as set out in the Constitution).

14. Democratic Decision Making

The Council considered a report of the Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services, to confirm the arrangements for the effective and safe continuation of democratic decision making whilst social distancing requirements were still in place post 7 May 2021.

In proposing the recommendations, the Leader noted that he hoped that the government would bring forward legislation to enable local government to be able to hold virtual meetings moving forward. The proposal was seconded by L Fry.

The Corporate Director, Legal and Democratic confirmed that recommendation v) was now not required as the court case referred to in the report had been lost. The proposer and seconder confirmed that they were moving recommendations i) to iv) as set out in the report.

R Knox proposed an additional recommendation v) as an amendment as follows; 'That the Leader, with support from all political parties represented on the Council, continues to lobby for the means to ensure that the Council, as well as town and parish councils, can continue to meet in hybrid arrangements in the future.' The amendment was seconded by T Cook.

The Leader confirmed he was content with the proposed amendment and would reinforce the points made, in a letter to the Minister, setting out the benefits of virtual meetings.

On being put to the vote the amendment was CARRIED.

Decision (as a substantive motion)

- (i) That subject to the exceptions described in paragraph 2.9 of the report all council meetings that are not executive in nature should continue to be held virtually from 7 May until such time as social distancing requirements are removed (currently scheduled to be lifted on 21 June 2021), with committee members expressing a 'minded to' decision in respect of recommendations set out in officer reports
- (ii) That as a temporary change to the scheme of delegation the Chief Executive, appropriate Executive Director, Corporate Director, Head of Service or Service Manager be authorised to exercise delegated powers to make non-executive decisions in the light of 'minded to' decisions expressed by members in the virtual meetings
- (iii) That the Leader should be asked to agree that the Cabinet continue to meet virtually (until such time as social distancing requirements are removed) with decisions to be made by the relevant portfolio holder in the light of views expressed by the wider Cabinet
- (iv) That all members should be given a dispensation under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 until such time as social distancing requirements are removed
- (v) That the Leader, with support from all political parties represented on the Council, continues to lobby for the means to ensure that the Council, as well as town and parish councils, can continue to meet in hybrid arrangements in the future.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that democratic decision making is able to continue effectively and safely whilst social distancing requirements are still in place post 7 May 2021, and ensuring that decision making is transparent, that local residents are appropriately represented, and that all local authority decisions have appropriate scrutiny.

15. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

16. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Agenda item 12 - Questions from Councillors

Question submitted by Cllr Brian Heatley

Adoption of a baseline budgeting procedure for setting the Dorset Council budget for 2021-22

At the Budget Scrutiny meeting of the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 11 December 2020, I suggested that the Portfolio Holder should select one substantial budget that should for the 2021-22 budget process be subject experimentally to a baseline budget procedure. This would be instead of the process hitherto used which places the emphasis on examining changes to the baseline rather than examining the baseline itself. There was some support for this, represented in the minutes by the entry:

- A request is made to include scrutiny of the Base Budget in next year's budget scrutiny process.

Since if we are to do this the selection of the budget concerned needs to be done in good time, has the Portfolio holder made such a selection, or if he has not done so, if and when he proposes to do so?

Response by Cllr Gary Suttle

Thank you Cllr Heatley for your question.

I stated in my speech setting the budget that the process would be enhanced for the coming year and that I had every intention of extending it. Following the matters raised at scrutiny the Cabinet agreed that officers would bring forward plans to review base budgets for services which members may want to focus specific attention on. This will need to be done in advance of the budget scrutiny settings/scrutiny process so that resource allocation next year can take place against a good knowledge of the current budget.

As promised at the time of the budget setting, it is our intention to schedule an additional scrutiny cafe-style event into the process. However, I would like this to look at the base budgets for all directorates and not single one out. The budget process is about assessing and ensuring continuity in funding for the whole Council and in singling out one specific area we cannot achieve the overall objectives.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 7.18 pm

Chairman

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