

**PLACE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 18 APRIL 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs Carole Jones (Chairman), Les Fry (Vice-Chairman), Tony Alford, Toni Coombs, Ryan Hope, Sherry Jespersen, Val Potheary, Maria Roe, Andrew Starr and Roland Tarr

**Present remotely:**

**Apologies:**

**Also present:** Cllr Jon Andrews, Cllr Simon Gibson, Cllr Jill Haynes and Cllr Jane Somper

**Also present remotely:** Cllr Ray Bryan

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

Dugald Lockhart (Service Manager Digital Place), Timothy Robertson (ICT Project Manager), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and John Miles (Democratic Services Officer Apprentice)

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

**53. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**54. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**55. Chairman's Update**

There were no updates from the Chairman for the meeting.

**56. Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements from members of the public or local organisations.

**57. Questions from Councillors**

There were no questions from councillors.

58. **Dorset Council's roles in ensuring better broadband and mobile coverage across Dorset - Developing a Digital Infrastructure Strategy**

The committee received and considered a report of the Project Manager with regard to the development of a Digital Infrastructure Strategy and which invited the committee to comment on the proposals and timescale for adoption of the strategy. In addition, a presentation was provided to highlight the key issues.

Councillors considered the issues arising from the report and presentation and discussion was held in the following areas:

- Links to the council's highways functions and need to ensure effective two-way engagement and understanding between the council and providers of fixed and mobile networks
- Ensuring ward councillors were briefed on relevant issues in their areas
- The council's planning functions and links to consideration of the value of masts versus landscape impact and the need to ensure a wider understanding of the roles and powers of the different parties (e.g. the council, network suppliers, landowners), links to the new local plan and the need to be more proactive on these issues, potential supplementary planning guidance and the production of simple guidance for communities including information on the council's website
- Early engagement between network suppliers and the council was encouraged
- It was felt that a wider discussion on the approach to these issues in the new local plan would be beneficial
- Consideration of opportunities for the council in providing support through the planning and highways functions
- The need to include a plan in the strategy to mitigate the impact on those areas that did not receive digital coverage and investigation of alternative sustainable solutions
- The need to raise awareness of changes to be made e.g. switch off of the public switch network and switching off of 2G and 3G networks, the timelines for these and an understanding of the impact of these changes
- Consideration of the role for the council in supporting those affected by changes to be made, including communities in remote locations and older and more vulnerable people
- Information to be provided to councillors to enable them to support and work with their communities
- Consideration of the issues relevant to more urban areas and tourist destinations, within the strategy
- Detail of networking and work being undertaken with other councils
- Opportunities to map council assets and link to future mast requirements – suggestion that this was progressed as an area of work.

It was agreed that an informal committee workshop would be held to discuss these issues further, with a date and arrangements to be confirmed following discussion with the Chairman, Vice-chairman and officers.

59. **Place and Resources Overview Committee Work Programme**

Councillors noted the committee's work programme and items scheduled for the next meeting. In addition, councillors noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.

60. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

61. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business.

**Duration of meeting:** 10.00 - 11.47 am

**Chairman**

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