

Public Document Pack



DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 11 MAY 2023

Present: Cllrs Rod Adkins, Tony Alford, Jon Andrews, Mike Barron, Pete Barrow, Shane Bartlett, Pauline Batstone, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Derek Beer, Richard Biggs, Alex Brenton, Cherry Brooks, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Graham Carr-Jones, Simon Christopher, Kelvin Clayton, Susan Cocking, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Jean Dunseith, Mike Dyer, Beryl Ezzard, 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, Rebecca Knox, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Howard Legg, Robin Legg, Cathy Lugg, David Morgan, Louie O'Leary, Jon Orrell, Andrew Parry, Mary Penfold, Bill Pipe, Val Pothecary (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, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, David Tooke, Bill Trite, David Walsh, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams and John Worth

Apologies: Cllrs Dave Bolwell, Tim Cook, Janet Dover, Paul Kimber, Emma Parker, Mike Parkes and Peter Wharf

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jennifer Lowis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. **Election of Chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr G Suttle and seconded by Cllr N Lacey-Clarke that Cllr V Pothecary be elected Chairman of the Council for 2023/24.

There were no other nominations.

Decision

That Cllr V Pothecary be elected as Chairman of the Council for 2023/24.

The Chairman thanked Cllr B Goringe for his support as Vice-Chairman during the previous year. She also thanked the Democratic Services Team Leader, her

Personal Assistant, and her partner. Cllr Potheary made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

2. Election of Vice-chairman

It was proposed by Cllr V Potheary and seconded by Cllr L O’Leary that Cllr W Trite be elected Vice-Chairman for 2023/24.

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and seconded by Cllr J Andrews that Cllr L Fry be elected Vice-Chairman for 2023/24.

Cllr L O’Leary requested a recorded vote and in accordance with the constitution this was supported by at least 10 members. The votes are recorded in the table below.

Decision

That Cllr W Trite be elected Vice-Chairman for 2023/24. The Vice-Chairman signed the declaration of acceptance of office and thanked Council for their support.

Election of Vice-Chairman (Cllr W Trite appointed) (Vice-Chairman of Full Council)	
Councillor Rod Adkins	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Anthony Alford	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Jon Andrews	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Mike Barron	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Pete Barrow	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Shane Bartlett	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Pauline Batstone	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Belinda Bawden	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Laura Beddow	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Derek Beer	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Richard Biggs	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Alex Brenton	Abstain
Councillor Cherry Brooks	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Piers Brown	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Ray Bryan	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Andy Canning	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Graham Carr-Jones	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Simon Christopher	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Kelvin Clayton	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Susan Cocking	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Robin Cook	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Toni Coombs	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Jean Dunseith	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Mike Dyer	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Beryl Ezzard	Abstain
Councillor Tony Ferrari	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Spencer Flower	Cllr W Trite

Councillor Les Fry	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Simon Gibson	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Barry Goringe	Cllr W Trite
Councillor David Gray	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Matthew Hall	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Paul Harrison	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Jill Haynes	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Brian Heatley	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Ryan Holloway	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Ryan Hope	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Rob Hughes	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Nick Ireland	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Sherry Jespersen	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Carole Jones	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Stella Jones	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Andrew Kerby	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Rebecca Knox	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Nocturin Lacey-Clarke	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Howard Legg	Abstain
Councillor Robin Legg	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Cathy Lugg	Cllr W Trite
Councillor David Morgan	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Louie O'Leary	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Jon Orrell	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Andrew Parry	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Mary Penfold	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Bill Pipe	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Val Potheary	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Byron Quayle	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Molly Rennie	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Belinda Ridout	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Mark Roberts	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Julie Robinson	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Maria Roe	Cllr L Fry
Councillor David Shortell	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Jane Somper	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Andrew Starr	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Gary Suttle	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Clare Sutton	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Roland Tarr	Cllr L Fry
Councillor David Taylor	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Gill Taylor	Cllr L Fry
Councillor David Tooke	Cllr L Fry
Councillor Bill Trite	Cllr W Trite
Councillor David Walsh	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Kate Wheller	Cllr W Trite
Councillor Sarah Williams	Cllr L Fry
Councillor John Worth	Cllr L Fry
Carried	

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman, subject to a minor amendment at min 52; replacing the word “reserved” with “deserved”.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

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

5. **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman reported to Council that Cllr S Jones had served as a Councillor for Dorset residents for 50 years. She took this opportunity to thank Cllr Jones for her dedicated service to the community.

6. **Election of Leader of Council**

It was proposed by Cllr A Parry seconded by Cllr L Beddow that Cllr S Flower be elected Leader of the Council for 2023/24.

Decision

That Cllr S Flower be elected as Leader of the Council for 2023/24.

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

The Leader of the Council announced the following appointments:

Deputy Leader of the Council – Cllr G Suttle

Portfolio Holder(s):

Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy – Cllr G Suttle

Assets and Property – Cllr A Parry

Corporate Development and Transformation – Cllr J Haynes

Culture and Communities – Cllr L Beddow

Economic Growth and Levelling-up – Cllr S Gibson

Highways, Travel and Environment – Cllr R Bryan

Adult Social Care, Health, and Housing – Cllr J Somper

Children, Education, Skills, and Early Help – Cllr B Quayle

Planning – Cllr D Walsh

8. **Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members**

No announcements were reported at the meeting.

9. **Public Participation - Questions and Statements**

There were 10 questions and statements received from members of the public and these are set out in appendix 1 to these minutes.

10. **Public Participation - petitions and deputations**

There were no petitions or deputations.

11. **Questions from Councillors**

There were 3 Cllr questions as appended to these minutes at appendix 2.

12. **Community Governance Review - Parishes in the Vale of Allen Group, the Winterborne Farringdon Group, Chickerell and Weymouth - Final Recommendations**

The Leader of the Council presented a report and its final recommendations of the community governance review of parishes in the Vale of Allen group, the Winterborne Farringdon group, Chickerell and Weymouth.

On 22 October 2022, Full Council had approved the terms of reference for the community governance review, looking at the existing parish governance arrangements in the parishes and inviting representations from local councils, residents, and any other interested parties in respect of the current and future arrangements. A cross-party working group had considered all the responses received during the second period of public consultation and the final recommendations from the group were set out in appendix 1 to the report.

The Leader of the Council proposed that “the proposals set out in Appendix 1 be adopted by the Council as Final Recommendations for the purposes of the Community Governance Review that will form a Reorganisation Order taking effect on 1 April 2024.” This was seconded by Cllr M Roberts.

Cllr L O’Leary presented the following amendment to the recommendation:

“I would like to make the below recommendation as an alternative community governance review proposal. This map is amendment to a proposal myself and Cllr Luke Wakeling of Weymouth council tried to come up with as a compromise. Sadly Weymouth council did not support the proposal. Therefore I would like to propose the below plan as alternative to their recommendation and also to Dorset council plan.

The numbers for all the wards are below. The variation in electors/seat is 1400-1900 (mean 1723) Just two wards with a var over 200.

Ward Name	No. of Councillors	Electorate	Electorate per Cllr
Broadway Upwey and Wey Valley	3	5202	1734
Littlemoor	2	3728	1864
Preston and Sutton Poyntz	3	4301	1433

Radipole	2	3747	1873
Lodmoor	2	3529	1764
Melcombe Regis	2	3970	1985
Westham West	3	5385	1795
Westham East	2	3316	1658
Rodwell	2	4221	2110
Chapplehay and Harbourside	2	3932	1966
Wyke Regis	2	3462	1731

Total Seats: 25

Average electors/seat: 1723

This alternative does key things

- Cuts the number of Weymouth councillors from 29 to 25
- Keep Weymouth town council ward within the same Parliamentary boundary so no ward is stretched over two constituencies.
- Only breaks Dorset council ward boundaries twice (both times in order to keep within Parliamentary boundaries and to achieve good electoral equality and keep good community cohesion)
- Listens to the concerns of Littlemoor and Chickerell residents and delivers for them and doesn't split communities and therefore achieves cohesion
- Gives communities such as Sutton Poyntz and Southill name recognition
- Has better electoral equality than the Dorset council option one as seen below and eliminates anomalies like Nottingham ward.

Dorset council ward options numbers. There are nine wards with a variance over 130 and six with a variance over 200.

n	seats	n/seat	var	name
3619	2	1809	60	Littlemoor
4515	2	2257	508	Preston
3848	2	1924	175	Upwey and Broadway
3513	2	1756	7	Melcombe Regis
176	1	176	-1572	Nottingham
3424	2	1712	-36	Lodmoor
4049	2	2024	275	Radipole
4249	2	2124	375	Rodwell
3231	2	1615	-133	Westham East
3670	2	1835	86	Westham West
2803	2	1401	-347	Wyke North
1005	1	1005	-743	Lanehouse
3852	2	1926	177	Wyke South

Total Seats: 24

Average electors/seat: 1748

Difference with Dorset council's proposal

What this plan does as opposed to Dorset council's is moves the 500 houses North of Littlemoor and the area around Nightingale drive out of the parish of Winterbourne Faringdon into the Weymouth parish and into the ward of Upwey

and Broadway as per the wishes of people in the consultation as they will share more similarities both in terms of community and representational circumstances. This gives Littlemoor good electoral equality as opposed to DC and Weymouth's plan. It also moves the Nottingham ward (which is the Chickerell DC ward) into the Upwey and Broadway ward to make a three member ward which would have far better electoral equality. It does cross DC border but keeps it in the same parliamentary boundary. It would keep Chickerell's border the same as DC recommends but move the Weymouth part of the Lanehouse ward into the Westham West ward. The rest of the plan largely keeps to Weymouth town councils wishes.

Electoral equality by variation from average number per councillor which is around 1725

Ward	DC plan 24 Cllrs	My plan 25 Cllrs	WTC plan 1 24 Cllrs	WTC plan 2 24 Cllrs
Littlemoor	60	139	146	146
Preston	508	-292	-258	-258
Upwey	175	-9	289	289
Melcombe	7	148	32	32
Lodmoor	N/A	39	38	38
Radipole	275	148	93	93
Pye/Rodwell	-347	385	55	N/A
Rodwell/Nothe	375	241	70	70
Westham East	-133	70	158	-151
Westham West	86	-67	261	-6
Wyke regis	177	6	157	157
Nottingham	-1572	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lanehouse	-734	N/A	N/A	N/A
Highest var dif	2080	385	547	547

Difference with WTC proposal

My submission is different from WTC's because it also put a focus on community cohesion which is ignored in their submission. My plan realises that while electoral equality is important so are natural boundaries, community boundaries, and cohesion of neighbourhoods. WTC's plan is designed for good equality but it doesn't even deliver that. It argues that the north side of Weymouth is over represented while the south side of Weymouth is under represented. But their plan would see Littlemoor and Upwey both area's that will see most of the future development under represented to offset overrepresentation in Preston which is an easily definable community that will grow. This is unfair as they are separate communities and should not just be lumped together. The difference in representation from wards in my plan is minimal the biggest difference is between Upwey with -264 and Lodmoor (which is central not Southern Weymouth or north by central or even East) which is 196 this is a difference of 460 which is small in the main scheme of things. Lodmoor is highly unlikely to expand while Upwey, Broadway, and Nottingham are likely to and already are. Weymouth's own plan has far worse differences between the largest and smaller variation from average. Weymouth's objection to the north of Weymouth being over represented by claiming that anything south of Upwey Broadway, Littlemoor and Preston is south Weymouth while ignoring their being a north south, east west and central area of

the town. This would be like claiming that everything south of Newcastle is the south. While it is southern to Newcastle it is not the South of England there are midlands, west and Eastern areas. Weymouth's plan claims to include future developments and take them into consideration. However several developments in Littlemoor and Preston including a new housing estate have been missed and ignores the planned development in the Sutton Poyntz neighbourhood plan. I fear Weymouth's plan that will leave areas of Weymouth's northern side under represented (A fact they have tried to hide by offsetting this against Preston's numbers) is part of further evidence that they have a negative attitude to this part of the town. Each ward should be looked at on its own merit.

As said below it does cross Dorset council boundaries twice.

1. It cuts the Winterbourne and Broadmayne ward and Upwey and Broadway ward by merging the Nightingale drive area and the development North of Littlemoor into the Upwey and Broadway town council ward. This area would still be split over two DC wards in the current DC proposal but would cut the same area by putting in the Littlemoor and Preston ward. This proposal though at least means that they share the same MP (As Upwey and Broadway is due to go into West Dorset), and town councillor as opposed to just a town councillor.
2. The second place is the Upwey and Broadway ward and Nottingham are by merging Nottingham (which is in the Chickerell DC ward) to the rest of the proposed Upwey and Broadway ward. This achieves far better electoral equality than the current proposal and also ensures that they are all within West Dorset.

Community cohesion boundary's and names

Weymouth unlike most towns in Dorset council but similar to Poole and Bournemouth is a collection of smaller communities, estates, villages, and suburbs. This means we must do what we can to keep those communities sovereign and separate but within Weymouth councils area.

Historically certain smaller communities in Weymouth have been overlooked and swallowed up. Southill with is a growing suburb has been part of Westham North since 1979 despite the fact it is a separate community and has more in common with the Radipole area. Sutton Poyntz is a village which is on the north side of Preston and has always been in both borough and county council and now town and unitary wards part of the same ward as Preston. This makes sense but it would be beneficial to ensure its name is included in the ward name.

The North side of Weymouth has easily definable communities. Littlemoor, Upwey and Broadway and Preston and Sutton Poyntz with Radipole on the edges. These communities make up under half of Weymouths population but will be where most of the large scale development will come from. It is crucial that

1. These communities have separate representation to protect their interests and ensure they have a voice on issues
2. These communities aren't at the mercy at the rest of the town by ensuring it has fair community based representation.
3. As these communities spill out into other administrative and electoral domains (parliamentary, unitary wards and currently other parish's) they need to keep within the same domain

4. These communities are different. On the north side Littlemoor is the second most deprived area in Weymouth while Preston and Upwey and Broadway are the most affluent. It is key to ensure Littlemoor has separate representation.

Conclusion

This plan delivers a plan that balances borders, numbers and communities. It cuts the number of councillors, achieves good electoral equality, keeps town council wards within Dorset council wards where it can and keeps them entirely within the same constituency. It listens to the voice of residents in ensuring that communities are protected and cohesive. I hope you look at this as an alternative when making your final decision.

My objections to Littlemoor being merged with the area to our north

-The official government guidance on community governance review states in paragraph 163 that "no parish ward should be split by such a boundary" this proposal cuts the Littlemoor ward across the Winterbourne and Broadmayne ward and the Littlemoor and Preston ward. If you move these borders you will render my unitary ward name mute as I would instead be the councillor for "some of Littlemoor and Preston". This will add confusion to the already confused borders that are not congruent with DC boundaries.

-While guidance has been stated that certain circumstances may warrant exceptions I still have not been informed why an exception was made for Nottingham (which at the next election would have 1 Councillor elected by 177 and only increase to 498 in 5 years' time while Littlemoor would have 1864 per one 1 Councillor) but not the 500 houses north of Littlemoor and the existing area around Nightingale drive

-Issues have been raised around the viability of neighbouring parish council and of the importance of local borders. But if the Nightingale drive area is taken into Weymouth Winterbourne and Faringdon parish council W&FPC they claim they will become unviable. If the area of 500 houses is kept in their area they say they will become unviable surely the two answers would be to either bring in the area up to the natural border of the Ridgeway into Weymouth town council. Or W&FPC need to adapt to new housing in order to remain viable. Surely people cannot just pick and choose what they want and don't want. Littlemoor is arguing only to retain what it already has which is sovereign separate community representation at a town council level based on its historic identity and borders.

-Littlemoor has had separate representation on the lower tier authority since 2004. Prior to that it was part of the North central ward. This ward was split into Wey Valley and Littlemoor because it was felt that both given their differences should have separate representation. Merging Littlemoor with a housing development in another area would go against this

-In paragraph 161 it says "In urban areas community identity tends to focus on a locality, whether this be a housing estate, a shopping centre or community facilities. Each locality is likely to have its own sense of identity. Again, principal

councils should consider each case on its merits having regard to information and evidence generated during the review." This can easily be said of the Littlemoor. It is built around the community centre and shopping precinct at its middle and kept separate from Preston by fields to its East, a large nature reserve to its south, either the A354 relief road or main railway line depending on where you class Littlemoor. To its north it is separated by Winterbourne Faringdon by the A353 Littlemoor road.

-Paragraph 162. States "In reaching conclusions on the boundaries between parish wards the principal council should take account of community identity and interests in the area, and consider whether any particular ties or linkages might be broken by the drawing of particular ward boundaries. Principal councils should seek views on such matters during the course of a review. They will, however, be mindful that proposals which are intended to reflect community identity and local linkages should be justified in terms of sound and demonstrable evidence of those identities and linkages." Littlemoor residents through their own voice, the view of myself as one of their Dorset councillors, in their attendance at a public meeting where they unanimously agreed and through their community group and community safety group have shown they feel they are a distinct community separate from the area to their north. This is due to historic boundaries, differences in representation both and past and present and demographic.

-Paragraph 159 It states that "In considering whether or not a parish should be divided into wards, the 2007 Act requires that consideration be given to whether:

- a) the number, or distribution of the local government electors for the parish would make a single election of councillors impracticable or inconvenient; and
- b) it is desirable that any area or areas of the parish should be separately represented"

As stated above these proposals create the ward of Nottingham in order to keep within Dorset council boundaries and to ensure the area/community of a parish is separately represented. Why can this not be done for the area north of us within Winterbourne and Farringdon?

-The rest of the guidance continually brings up the issue of cohesion 31 times in 54 pages, it also brings up identity 14 times, yet there seems to be little attention paid to the potential breaking of community and neighbourhood cohesion in regards to Littlemoor due to the feeling that the rules, guidance and attention paid to responses are not being treated fairly compared to other areas. Nor does it address concerns raised that Littlemoor's identity could be threatened.

-The arguments for or against various aspects of these proposals seem to be based on finance and precept monies. This is despite the guidance stating otherwise. The arguments against the Littlemoor ward gaining this new development seem to be the only ones being made based on the guidance and spirit of the rules and guidance not on money.

-Littlemoor is semi-rural. It is largely housing with some community facilities and some shops. The area to the north will contain housing but also a hotel, car show

room and large industrial units this will upset the balance and makeup of the area.

-While some groundwork has been done of this site the 500 homes have not yet been built. Cllr Flower did mention at a public meeting that petitions on specific areas could be brought forward at any time and the guidance does allow it surely it should make sense to keep the status quo and wait to see this development pan out and give the residents of that area a say on what area they live in? This approach is more in keeping with the spirit of the purpose of the community governance review.

-In the original submission of the community governance review Littlemoor's border remained unchanged. Why has this now been changed especially as it is changing the status quo and also breaking important guidelines against the wishes of the community.

-Littlemoor as it currently known sits in the ecclesiastical parish of Littlemoor serviced by St Francis church which for a modern congregation is a healthy number. The 500 houses sits in the ecclesiastical parish of Bincombe serviced by the village church at Holy Trinity which has a small congregation. Keeping these 500 houses linked to Bincombe may help bolster numbers here. The churches of Bincombe, Upwey and Brodaway share the same Vicar as well and are in the same grouping. The banner in St Nicholas church Broadway is emabnnered "Broadway cum Bincombe" showing a long term connection to the two communities.

-Littlemoor residents tend to socialise and congregate at Littlemoor community centre and the Top Club. There are no pubs or cafes on the estate so these venues along with the church tend to be more used for these activities. While residents in the Nightingale drive area tend to socialise at the Standard pub in Upwey and Broadway or the Reynolds institute in Upwey and Broadway. The community to the North will also have its own community centre.

-When discussing issues relating to our community Littlemoor residents use one of the buildings on the estate to hold their residents meetings at either the community centre, the church or the Top Club. The residents in the Nightingale drive area have always tended to use the Reynolds hall or the Memorial Hall in Upwey where their parish council also meets.

-The guidance around community governance talks a lot around cohesion and also brings up the fact reviews should not break up cohesive communities. The resentment against the development of 500 houses to our north and the impact that will have on our community and it's infrastructure is already fomenting. Forcibly merging the two area's against the settled area's will is likely to only increase this resentment."

The amendment was seconded by Cllr T Ferrari.

Members debated the merits for and against the amendment and upon being put to the vote the amendment was **CARRIED**, and this became the substantive motion.

Cllr R Hope proposed the following amendment to the substantive motion, and this was seconded by Cllr G Taylor.

- “(a) That DC should adopt as a draft recommendation for the purposes of the community governance review the revised parish and ward boundaries as identified in map, Appendix A, and the ward names and councillor numbers set out in the table in the documents published with the agenda at [Cllr Hope & Cllr Taylor amendment CGR 11 May 2023.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#) and
- (b) That the draft recommendation be published for consultation purposes for eight weeks.
- (c) That the results of the consultation, together with proposed final recommendations be reported to Full Council on 12 October 2023.”

Members debated the merits for and against the amendment and upon being put to the vote the amendment was **LOST**.

Cllr S Cocking put forward the following amendment in respect of Ferrybridge, Portland, due to the impact of Cllr L O’Leary’s amendment becoming the substantive motion.

“With reference agenda item 13 and page 48, firstly I fully support the statement from Mr Andy Matthews. Weymouth’s submission included a Suggestion I highlight the word Suggestion is to extend the boundary from the centre of the now demolished old Ferrybridge to the centre of the existing Ferrybridge some 100 m to the south.

During all the time that this governance review proposal has been in progress and a working group set up, Portland was not mentioned in the front page of the report packs. It only stated Parishes in the Vale of Allen Group, the Winterbourne Farringdon group, Chickerell and Weymouth. Portland was never in the scope of the working group when it was first established, but later as Weymouth had made a Suggestion then it has been included. Portland Town Council objected to this, part of their objection is The 2021 update of the NPPFF included wording policy which encouraged Planning groups to seek out opportunities to support renewable energy. Paragraph 156 Local planning authorities should support community led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy. As set out in the February 2023, the Portland Neighbourhood Plan has a specific enabling policy concerning renewables and the associated text specifically mentions the Ferrybridge area. If the request by Weymouth Town council is approved, it could compromise this early opportunity by splitting the administrative area of the fleet entrance between the two councils.

If this proposal is supported what will happen to the Royal Manor Status of that land ? has the Court Leet been consulted as they are custodians of the land ,I quote from the Court Leet, Portland is a Royal Manor, its main concerns are to maintain and administer the commons on the land, there are two types of common land Freehold and Crown Common land this second type includes Hamm Common along Portland Beach Road, its statement has been the same for

hundreds of years and still exists and that is “Safeguarding and protecting the common land against encroachments and abuse”

This is my objection to this proposal of the encroachment onto Portland from Weymouth.

I am proposing an amendment to the boundary line around Ferrybridge, that it remains as is the current boundary line.
No properties full within this area therefore there will be no impact on electoral equality as a result of my proposed amendment.”

The motion was seconded by Cllr R Hughes.

Members debated the merits for and against the amendment and upon being put to the vote the amendment was **CARRIED**.

Decision (Substantive)

- (a) That the proposal set out above and in [Cllr L O’Leary’s Amendment Community governance review alternative plan](#) be adopted by the Council for the purposes of the Community Governance Review that will form a Reorganisation Order taking effect on 1 April 2024.
- (b) That the boundary line around Ferrybridge remains as is in the current boundary line.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that community governance arrangements within the Dorset Council area are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in the area and achieve electoral equality.

13. Appointment to Committees, Joint Panels and Board and the election of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out the proposed allocation of committee seats in line with political balance rules and, in accordance with the Council’s constitution, to make appointments to committees, joint panels and boards. The report also set out the proposed Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of ordinary committees for the forth coming year.

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower seconded by Cllr L Fry

Decision

- (a) That the allocation of committee seats in accordance with political balance rules, the appointments to ordinary committees and appointments to joint panels and boards, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2023/24 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 of the report.

- (b) That authority be delegated to the Director of Legal & Democratic in consultation with the appropriate Political Group Leader to make in- year changes to committee, joint panels, and board appointments.
- (c) That Full Council appoints committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen for the 2023/24 municipal year, as set out at Appendix 4 of the report.

Reason for the decision

To comply with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Dorset Council Procedure Rules (as set out in the Constitution).

Full Council adjourned for a short comfort break at 19.52 and returned at 20.05pm.

14. Review of Public Participation Rules

The Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee set out a recommendation from the committee proposing changes to the public participation process following a cross-party review.

Cllr R Biggs proposed the following recommendation, and this was seconded by Cllr S Flower.

“That the Procedure Rules for Public Participation be amended as follows:

- (a) That the Council accepts the first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each Full Council meeting on a first come first served basis in accordance with the current deadline for receipt of questions and statements.
- (b) That in exceptional circumstances the Chairman of Council has discretion to allow more than 8 questions.
- (c) That any questions received over the first 8 questions, the resident or organisation will be asked if they wish to receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder.
- (d) That members of the public or organisations can submit a maximum of 1 question or 1 statement at each meeting of the Full Council.
- (e) That each question or statement submitted be up to a word count of 450 and the response from the Portfolio holder be a maximum of 300 words.
- (f) That statements received by residents or organisations be published, in full, before the Full Council meeting as a supplement to the agenda and published, in full, as an appendix to the minutes but will not be read out at the Full Council meeting to allow more time for questions and responses.”

Cllr B Bawden proposed an amendment with the addition of (e) "A person who has submitted a question may ask a follow-up question in the meeting, remotely by teams, or in writing, once Dorset Council's reply to the question has been received." This was seconded by Cllr K Clayton.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was **LOST**.

Following debate, on the original recommendation was put to the vote.

Decision

That the Procedure Rules for Public Participation be amended as follows:

- (a) That the Council accepts the first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received from members of the public or organisations for each Full Council meeting on a first come first served basis in accordance with the current deadline for receipt of questions and statements.
- (b) That in exceptional circumstances the Chairman of Council has discretion to allow more than 8 questions.
- (c) That any questions received over the first 8 questions, the resident or organisation will be asked if they wish to receive a written response from the Portfolio Holder.
- (d) That members of the public or organisations can submit a maximum of 1 question or 1 statement at each meeting of the Full Council.
- (e) That each question or statement submitted be up to a word count of 450 and the response from the Portfolio holder be a maximum of 300 words.
- (f) That statements received by residents or organisations be published, in full, before the Full Council meeting as a supplement to the agenda and published, in full, as an appendix to the minutes but will not be read out at the Full Council meeting to allow more time for questions and responses."

Reason for the decision

To enable the Chairman of Council to manage the half hour public participation period effectively and allow each person who submits a question to read out the question in full and receive a response.

15. Appointment of Co-opted Committee Members - Audit & Governance Committee

The Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee presented a report on the proposal to appoint 2 co-opted independent members to the Audit and Governance Committee. These appointments would supplement the expertise of existing membership, in accordance with CIPFA guidelines and good practice.

It was proposed by Cllr R Biggs seconded by Cllr S Cocking

Decision

- (a) That the constitution be amended to incorporate two co-opted members to the Audit & Governance Committee, in advance of the September 2023 meeting; and
- (b) That the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendation that an annual allowance of £2,000 should be payable per co-opted member.

Reason for the decision

To ensure that the Audit and Governance Committee had the appropriate level of technical expertise to perform its role as set out in its terms of reference.

16. Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officers and delegation to amend polling places

The Chief Executive presented a report to appoint Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for the effective and efficient administration of the electoral service function including implementation for Election Act 2022 responsibilities, and to agree a delegation for temporary changes to polling places.

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower seconded by Cllr C Sutton.

Decision

- (a) That the following officers be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers with Full Powers: Legal and Democratic Services, Service Manager, Democratic and Electoral Services and Team Leader, Electoral Services.
- (b) That all Electoral Services Officers be appointed as Deputy Electoral Registration Officers for the purpose of issuing temporary Voter Authority Certificates only.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer the designation of temporary polling places.

Reason for the decision

To expedite the issuing of temporary Voter Authority Certificates, and ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the electoral service function if the Electoral Registration Officer is unable to act. Also, to enable a designation of an alternative polling place (polling station) if the place agreed by Full Council is temporarily unavailable for use.

17. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

18. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business to report.

Appendix 1 - Public Participation Questions and Responses
Appendix 2 - Councillor Q&A's

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.23 pm

Chairman

.....

This page is intentionally left blank

Annual Meeting of Council 11 May 2023

Questions & Statements submitted for the Public Participation Period

1. Question – submitted by Shaun Leavey OBE

I request details of action taken by Dorset Council within the past 12 months to proactively safeguard listed buildings (Grade 1 & 2) within the county, and to state the number of occasions when the Council's statutory powers were used.

Response by Cllr David Walsh

Maintaining listed buildings is primarily the responsibility of the landowner or occupier. Whilst Local authorities have a number of discretionary powers that can be used, this is only undertaken when other options have been exhausted and it is expedient and in the public interest to do so. In general we strive to resolve issues in a pro active manner with owners.

Whilst the council has made a number of section 215 notices in recent years, it has not been considered expedient to issue any in the last 12 months.

2. – Question submitted by Roger White MA FSA

Kathryn Melhuish of Dorset Council has made the following statement to the Georgian Group, which is the statutory national amenity society covering listed 18th century buildings, regarding Newell House in Sherborne:

Dorset Council is aware of the condition of the Grade II listed Newell House. But as there are no active breaches of planning or listed building control, its state of repair is a matter for the property owner to address in the first instance.

We have brought this to the attention of the owner and also looked into the scope of using powers under the Town and Country Planning Act to address maintenance of the building. But such action needs to be demonstrably in the public interest and, in assessing this, we must also have regard to the circumstances of the owner/occupier. At this present time, it is considered that such action would not be expedient but officers will keep the situation under review.

It is very obvious that, while it may technically be the responsibility of the property owner to address the very poor and deteriorating condition of Newell House, it is equally clear that the owner in question has created the current situation and has absolutely no intention of taking action, having ignored offers of help from the Sherborne CPRE, for instance. He does not reply to letters, he does not live in the building - though a light is left on to create the impression that he does - and there is no evidence that he has carried out any repairs since it closed as a school in 2000. So this prominently sited listed building has been sitting deteriorating in full view for over 20 years. In the circumstances, I do not see how can it be argued that 'there are no active breaches of listed building control'. Would the Council find it more concerning, and be spurred into action, if the owner was replacing the windows in UPVC without listed building consent? If so, this clearly makes an absurdity of Dorset Council's view of listed buildings as a whole.

Question:

Why does Dorset Council continue to be so reluctant to take action over the condition of Newell House? Further, when did anyone from Dorset Council last visit Newell House to assess its condition, and, assuming that such a visit took place, what conclusions were drawn?

3. – Statement and question submitted by Julia Findlater

Statement

As residents of Sherborne we have watched the gradual deterioration of Newell House since it ceased being a school in 2000. The house is rarely occupied and the decline of the property is now accelerating. Vegetation overwhelms the East elevation, some of it growing through broken windows. The building is not weather tight and its fine interiors will soon be in an advanced state of decay. We have raised our concerns with Dorset Council who inform us they are keeping a 'watching brief,

In recent weeks a gate on the perimeter wall of the house was forced open and graffiti daubed on the walls inside the property.

Question

Given the recent vandalism, which we hope does not lead to further more serious attacks, precisely how far does the deterioration of Newell House have to go before Dorset Council will take decisive action to prevent further decline?

Response to Questions 2 & 3 above by Cllr David Walsh

Dorset Council is aware of the condition of the Grade II listed Newell House. But as there are no active breaches of planning or listed building control, its state of repair is a matter for the property owner to address in the first instance.

We have brought this to the attention of the owner and also looked into the scope of using powers under the Town and Country Planning Act to address maintenance of the building. But such action needs to be demonstrably in the public interest and, in assessing this, we must also have regard to the circumstances of the owner/occupier. At this present time, it is considered that such action would not be expedient but officers will keep the situation under review.

4. Question – submitted by Gerald Rigler, Chairman – Purbeck & Poole Group of Dorset CPRE

Since the street lighting team is required to maintain real understanding of current needs/research (with a view to enabling regular reviews of policy to keep it sound), why are the perceived associated contractual arrangements (with Enerveu Ltd) being allowed to inhibit implementation of any relevant changes until 2032?

(Mr G Rigler is unable to attend the meeting so therefore will receive a written response).

5. Statement – submitted by Andy Matthews, Chair, Portland Community Partnership Ferrybridge Boundary

The officers report accompanying this item indicates that there is a minded decision to support a change to the Boundary despite the submission of Portland Town Council which has a legitimate reason for putting forward the case as stated.

Portland Community Partnership which supports the Town Council in various areas in particular the development of the Portland Neighbourhood Plan had originally made a similar request on behalf of the Town Council and despite being recognised by the Authority [Partnership working In Weymouth and Portland](#) had this submission not formally recorded. However, at the Full Council meeting of the 14th July did conclude that a Boundary change was not necessary ref Agenda Item 24 – Appendix 1 - Recommendation 31 (see link)

[Appendix 1 - Draft FINAL Recommendations.pdf \(dorsetcouncil.gov.uk\)](#)

The subsequent review of the Weymouth and surrounding area authorised at the Full Council meeting of the 20th October Item 39 Appendix 1 did not formally scope in the Portland Parish and boundary. (see link)

[Community Governance Review - Weymouth and surrounding areas and Vale of Allen - Dorset Council](#)

Nevertheless Portland Town Council responded in good faith to the request and reiterated the original position.

The moving of the Boundary will entail unnecessary costs, result in confusion and could in fact limit opportunities for the area which are improved by maintaining the current position.

6. – Statement submitted by Cllr David Harris (Weymouth Town Council)

Dear Fellow Councillors

The guidance for CGR makes it very clear that Parish and Town Council Wards are the building blocks for the next tier of councils and that these higher tier council wards are the building blocks for parliamentary seats. Lower tier wards should reflect the communities that people live in and not depend on lines drawn on maps mostly over 100 years ago or for Dorset Council 4 years ago. This process has not followed these logical requirements. It is suggested in para 4.3 that DC and WTC can work together to resolve the present problems when DC wards are reviewed at some time in the future. However it is also clear that this review cannot alter parish/town boundaries and our communities will still be split because DC wards overlap the boundaries between Chickerell and Weymouth with parts of present Weymouth being allocated to the Chickerell DC ward.

When the first consultation came out last year it correctly recognised that Weymouth had expanded since the last review 50 years ago and that there were estates on the Western edge of Weymouth that had crossed the old West Dorset boundary. These communities at Wyke, Littlesea and Cobham Drive, which are marked on the distributed map, were brought together and rightly placed in Weymouth. At that time, for some unknown reason, DC joined

them into a single town ward completely separated and in no way a community. Weymouth Town Council complained about having such a non-sensical, non-community based ward and hence this second consultation.

The new proposal, on which we have supposedly been consulted, removed this problem by leaving these three areas split as communities and handing them back to Chickerell. This left estates split and communities fractured. When on Dorset County Council I used to represent the 14 houses in Cobham drive actually on the Weymouth side of the line, having to drive past 25 houses in West Dorset to get to some of them. To quote from the guidance in this paper, the purpose of a CGR is to produce clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features and remove anomalies. Leaving this unchanged is clearly NOT doing this. I have just persuaded First Bus to keep a Weymouth Westham Bus going for another three months, which has an impact on all the residents of Cobham Drive. The Chickerell bus could not be involved in the solution as Cobham Drive is not connected to Chickerell by the road system in any way.

The main response by the town council, representing 53000 people, to this flawed consultation, was to return to the original boundaries suggested by DC. To achieve this consistency with the logic of the process (Community coherence and democratic representation, or effective and convenient) Weymouth Town Councillors were willing to represent almost double the number of people represented by all the other town councillors in the County. We accepted this added burden knowing this would join communities together in a sensible way and concur with democratic requirements.

Wyke, Littlesea and Cobham Drive all look to Weymouth for their services, their parks and open spaces, their shopping, the beach and sea front and toilets. Littlesea and Cobham Drive are almost equidistant from either town hall but Wyke is over ½ mile further from Chickerell than from Weymouth. Littlesea and Cobham Drive residents have to drive over ½ mile through Weymouth to get to the boundary of Chickerell. Wyke residents drive **over a mile through Weymouth** before getting road access to the Chickerell boundary. Clearly defined boundaries, tied to firm ground features and remove anomalies is the purpose of the review. These areas have easy access to Weymouth but are separated from Chickerell by open spaces, industrial estates and will go to Weymouth to gain access to DC services in Weymouth library.

The recommendation before you today is a missed opportunity to restructure our boundaries so they make sense to the people living in them in the 21st century. Although the consultation period was several weeks the recommendations before you today were formulated by the working group the day after the consultation closed and so clearly the time to consider the logic of alternative views and feedback, with the opportunity for site visits, was minimal for valid decisions. Councillor Gill Taylor has her house in Littlesea, Weymouth, but her garden is in Chickerell, she would have willingly hosted the review team to tea so they could see for themselves the illogic of their thinking.

Weymouth residents deserve logical community boundaries – the recommendation before you today fails to achieve this and leaves me wondering what the value of this entire exercise has been. It claims to be using DC ward boundaries as its guiding rule but then says in the paragraph concerning Bincombe “For good community governance the new development and the present split area of Nightingale Drive should be in Weymouth” The new development land in Southill will be crossing the proposed boundary between Weymouth and Chickerell yet this has been left unchanged to create split communities in the future.

I urge you to vote against the recommendation being put before you on the basis that it contradicts itself and fails to join communities together as it is required to do.

(Please see *Boundary map as a separate appendix to this document*).

7. Statement from Winterborne Farringdon Parish Council – Cllr Graham Brant

Section 4, Recommendation 3 on page 9

The paragraph:

“Whilst Winterborne Farringdon Grouped Parish Council supported the move of the southern boundary of Bincombe where a large scale development is proposed, they did not support the move of other existing properties, particularly Nightingale Drive. They expressed concern that this may impact on electoral equality of Dorset Council’s ward boundaries, and may also make their own parish potentially unviable. Dorset Council considered this submission carefully but felt that in the interests of good community governance, that [sic] the residents of the Nightingale Drive area should reside within a single parish, and not be split across 2 different parishes.”

... Is an inaccurate characterisation of Winterborne Farringdon’s stated position.
It would better read:

“Winterborne Farringdon Group of Parish Councils [WFGPC] supported the northward move of the southern boundary of Bincombe where a large scale development is proposed but not yet built. But they did not support the move of existing properties, particularly Nightingale Drive, into Weymouth Town Council [WTC] until the Dorset Council ward and Parliamentary constituency can be similarly realigned. WFGPC recognised that such a realignment of the ward boundary may impact on the carefully constructed electoral equality of Dorset Council’s ward boundaries so may have knock on effects. As a secondary issue, WFGPC noted that the loss of such a large proportion of the existing population may make the existing parish grouping unviable and other forms of representation, such as individual parish meetings, may have to be considered.”

Dorset Council claim to have ‘considered this submission carefully’ but seem to have misunderstood the nuances of WFGPC’s position and instead relied too much on WTC’s characterisation of it in their submission. With due respect to Dorset Council, the report’s conclusion that ‘in the interests of good community governance, the residents of the Nightingale Drive area should reside within a single parish, and not be split across 2 different parishes’ is a logical *non sequitur*, it is already split by the illogical 1933 boundary but the large majority currently live in Bincombe. The question for the CGR is when and how to bring about a more logical solution.

In summary, the position of this council is simply:

- 1. Move the boundary NOW in all those areas where development has yet to take place.**
- 2. DO NOT move the boundary in those areas where there is an existing population UNTIL the DC ward and Parliamentary constituency can be similarly realigned.**

(Please see *boundary map as a separate appendix to this document*)

8. – Question submitted by Richard Thomas

In response to a question from a member of the public at the Council's meeting on 14 February, Cllr Flower concluded, on the matter of so-called 'predetermination': 'My encouragement to councillors is to seek advice from the Monitoring Officer before committing in public to a particular point of view.'

This was because Cllr Flower appeared to believe that elected members of Dorset Council are sufficiently feeble of mind that 'there are dangers in a councillor associating themselves closely with one particular pressure group and speaking after having listened only to that group' and 'doing so can give the impression that they have made up their mind in advance and even that they are speaking on behalf of that group.'

The Localism Act 2011, however, makes it very clear that it is an intrinsic part of any elected members role 'to engage in an open and rigorous debate with their local communities about council business.' Further, the Act, according to the Local Government Association, 'clarifies that decision-makers will not be taken to have had (or to have appeared to have had) a closed mind when making the decision just because (i) they had previously done anything that directly or indirectly indicated what view the decision-maker took, or would or might take, in relation to a matter, and (ii) the matter was relevant to the decision.'

Question to Cllr Flower: Will Cllr Flower therefore admit that his admonition to Dorset members that they must seek the permission of Mr Mair before they can voice an opinion in public was wrong and is misguided and will he accept that an elected member is entitled to any view he or she cares to express in public without having to seek the permission of anyone, either officer or another member? Will he further accept that to do so is not only lawful but a basic democratic right in a country that boasts of an individual's right to free speech?

Response by Cllr Spencer Flower

In response to a question put to me at the February Council meeting I **encouraged** councillors to seek **advice** from the Monitoring Officer about questions of predetermination. I did not as the questioner supposes say that councillors needed **permission** from an officer before speaking publicly.

My answer tonight is no different than the one I gave in February when I was asked about the distinction between a councillor who is predisposed to a point of view and one who has a predetermined position.

Like anyone else a councillor can be predisposed to a particular point of view. That is to be expected and is, I am told, perfectly lawful. What we must not do is approach decisions having already made up our minds in advance and unwilling to listen. There are dangers in a councillor associating themselves closely with one particular pressure group and speaking after having listened only to that group. Doing so can give the impression that they have made up their mind in advance and even that they are speaking on behalf of that group.

The law around predetermination is complex, with the potential for significant consequences if we get it wrong. My encouragement to councillors is to seek **advice** on such matters from the Monitoring Officer before committing themselves in public to a particular point of view.

9. – Question submitted by Tracee Cossey

Is it correct that democratic organisational or public participation in council meetings is to be limited in future and if so, why?

10. – Question submitted by Giles Watts

In the report from the Review of Public Participation Rules, the recommendation is that the rules be changed so that Council only accepts the first 8 questions and the first 8 statements received.

"While I appreciate that Council needs to manage the half-hour public participation and thus is unable to do this is an excess of questions and statements are received from residents or organisations, I see no reason why all statements should not be published in full in the agenda and the minutes. Furthermore, it would not affect the management of the public half hour if any questions in excess of 8, where the resident or organisation has requested a response, were to be published in the agenda and in the minutes. This would however provide the benefit of providing public visibility of all questions asked of Council and the responses given, and all statements made.

"Will Council consider changing the proposed Procedure Rules to allow for all statements to be accepted and published, and for all questions asked and answers given, whether read out in the meeting or not, to be published in the agenda and the minutes?"

Response to questions 9 & 10 by Cllr Spencer Flower

This matter has been discussed by a cross party working group and considered by the Audit & Governance Committee, all members will have the opportunity to debate the recommendations when the report is considered later in this meeting at agenda item 15.

This page is intentionally left blank

**Full Council
11 May 2023**

Questions submitted by Councillors

Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Les Fry

Following Natural England's latest report on Nitrates in September 2022, the vast majority of planning applications are still stuck unable to proceed. Developers are asking for advice and guidance from Dorset Council.

Firms are becoming concerned about their staff as they scramble about to find work to keep them employed, they don't want to let them go as they will be needed when applications are approved. Much needed homes are not being built due to the delay in granting consent.

An amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will require the upgrade of all sewerage treatment works serving more than 2,000 people, but this decision may still be way off.

Can an update on the advice and guidance from the Council for developers be given so that jobs are not lost?

Response by Cllr David Walsh

There are five catchment areas for internationally protected wetland habitats within, or overlapping with, Dorset Council's administrative area where phosphorus and/or nitrogen levels have the potential to adversely affect water quality. Dorset Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that any development it permits will not adversely affect the integrity of any internationally protected site.

The largest and most significant catchment area affecting Dorset in terms of geographical area and housing applications is Poole Harbour, and Dorset Council has in place an adopted strategy to mitigate the impacts of nitrogen from new residential development. However, the advice from Natural England in September 2022 confirmed that phosphorus is also an issue for Poole Harbour.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is proposing measures which will require improvements to waste water treatment works which, if enacted, will go a significant way to mitigating phosphorus impacts. However, as drafted, there is a risk that smaller treatment works would not be in scope and so the Leader of Dorset Council has written to the Secretary of State to request that all necessary wastewater treatment works in the Poole Harbour catchment are within scope of the intended improvements, and officers have held subsequent meetings with government departments, Natural England and Wessex Water to look at this further. Government is giving careful consideration to Dorset Council's position and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is anticipated to receive Royal Assent during the Summer, at which point we hope to have greater certainty to offer applicants and developers. In the meantime, officers are continuing to work proactively to look at finding solutions, including:

- Working with Registered Providers to deliver mitigation to existing housing stock to provide additional capacity for affordable housing units;
- Engaging with DLUHC to seek additional funding to bring forward mitigation;

- Investigating mitigation options outside of the Poole Harbour catchment, in partnership with neighbouring authorities.

Our website contains information on the latest position and we will continue to provide updates and guidance as the situation evolves.

Question 2 - submitted by Cllr Les Fry

We seem to be going headlong down the Electric car route without much consideration of the impact on the climate and our planet, electric cars emit no pollutants, so that's all right then?

We need Electricity to charge our cars and we know that here in Dorset we are short of sufficient power for our Commercial needs, with some businesses unable to settle here in Dorset due to the lack of electricity. We also seem to be totally ignoring the impact on the environment with the significant mining required and precious metals needed to build our batteries, see the Channel 4 program on mining in The Congo. I am aware of a possible alternative Battery using Ceramic instead of Lithium, which is an exciting prospect.

We know that electric powered vehicles are not suitable for Agriculture, heavy industry or Road Haulage to name just a few examples.

Fossil fuel powered vehicles are being phased out in a few years (from 2030 onwards), as yet we do not seem to have a suitable alternative fuel source.

What is Dorset Council doing to explore an improved electric supply to the County and alternative fuel sources, such as Hydrogen?

Response by Cllr Ray Bryan

Road transport is the UK's highest emitting sector and decarbonising it is a strategic priority. EVs will be central, but they are not a panacea and will be pursued alongside enabling alternatively fuelled vehicles, boosting vehicle occupancy, and facilitating modal shift.

Our strategy for replacing vehicles is two-pronged: EVs for smaller vehicles, and alternative fuels for larger vehicles like HGVs or tractors.

We have taken great steps forward on the smaller fleet having recently expanded our EV pool car fleet substantially, and replaced several small vehicles with EV's and have plans for further expansion over the coming years. To support this, we are expanding the EV infrastructure, such as the 14 new charge points here at County Hall and exploring rolling this out to other Council sites. And through the LEVI funding from government will strengthen the EV network across the county.

The larger fleet is more challenging, but we have been actively exploring a range of technologies to include trials of EV waste vehicles, exploration of hydrotreated vegetable oil, and biomethane-powered vehicles and engaging with the private sector (including vehicle manufacturers) on developing the prospects for local deployment of hydrogen. Additionally, we have been support the South West's first green hydrogen manufacturing by Canford Renewable Energy, through our Low Carbon Dorset programme.

Tech and policy is rapidly evolving on alternative fuels, and much is dependent on government's wider hydrogen strategy, trials, market developments, costs, infrastructure

deployment, and fuel production capacity. We'll continue to keep an eye on opportunities and continue engaging with manufacturers as the situation evolves to nurture a suitable role for alternative fuels alongside EVs.

Grid capacity in Dorset is a concern for the deployment of low carbon technologies such as EV's, although National Grid has given assurances that it will be robust to cope with increased demand for EV's. We are actively engaging with Network Operators and supporting them to anticipate need – to support their strategic investment in a locally efficient and responsive grid.

Question 3 – submitted by Cllr Matt Hall

Would the relevant Portfolio Holder provide a figure for the numbers of residents who had their parking permit renewed by taking the payment a week before the renewal date and with no form of reminder being sent? Would the Portfolio Holder agree that considering the current cost of living crisis that lack of any form of reminder was in hindsight a mistake?

Response by Cllr Ray Bryan

We do send out renewal reminders for all our permits by e-mail. We have not had any contact relating to the issue below.

We don't set up accounts on auto renewal, the customer has to opt into the system when they apply for the permit.

We will check our systems to ensure they are working correctly but please provide as much information as you can to help investigate the case in question. Any details can be sent to Michael Westwood.

This page is intentionally left blank