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## DORSET COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 MAY 2024

**Present:** Cllrs Val Potheary, Bill Trite, Jon Andrews, Jindy Atwal, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Derek Beer, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Bridget Bolwell, Dave Bolwell, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Barry Goringe, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Stella Jones (Chair), Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Robin Legg, Cathy Lugg, Rory Major, Craig Monks, David Morgan, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Emma Parker, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Julie Robinson, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Jane Somper, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, David Tooke, James Vitali, Claudia Webb, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

**Apologies:** Cllrs Jill Haynes, Jon Orrell and Kate Wheller

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Paul Beecroft (Communications Business Partner), 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), Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Turnbull (Democratic and Electoral Services Apprentice) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**1. Election of Chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr S Jones be elected Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

There were no other valid nominations received.

**Decision**

That Cllr S Jones be elected as Chairman of the Council for 2024/25 Municipal Year.

2. **Election of Vice-chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and seconded by Cllr N Ireland that Cllr L Fry be elected Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.

It was proposed by Cllr L O'Leary and seconded by Cllr A Parry that Cllr K Wheller be elected Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.

**Decision**

That Cllr Les Fry be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2024/25 Municipal Year.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Haynes, J Orrell and K Wheller.

4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 were confirmed and signed.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

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

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

7. **Election of Leader of Council**

It was proposed by Cllr A Canning and seconded by Cllr R Legg that Cllr N Ireland be elected Leader of the Council for 2024/25.

**Decision**

That Cllr N Ireland be elected as Leader of the Council

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

The Leader of the Council announced the following appointments:

Deputy Leader – Cllr R Biggs

**Portfolio Holder(s):**

Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up – Cllr R Biggs

Finance & Capital Strategy – Cllr S Clifford

Corporate Development, Transformation, Digital & Change – Cllr R Holloway

Place Commissioned Services (Highways, Waste, Travel, Leisure etc.) – Cllr J Andrews

Children's Services, Education & Skills – Cllr C Sutton  
Adult Social Care – Cllr S Robinson  
Public Health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Services – Cllr G Taylor  
Planning and Emergency Planning – Cllr S Bartlett  
Customer, Culture and Community Engagement – Cllr R Hope

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

The Leader of the Council welcomed all members to the chamber and congratulated them on their election or re-election. He also thanked Members who had served on Dorset Council for the past five years, including those who had stood down or not re-elected. He advised that he would be launching a review into a number of key issues that had been raised by residents prior to the local elections taking place, details included:

- Car parking charges
- Bus services
- Cost of living crisis

Further to the points raised above, he advised that there were longer-term ambitions to increase the building of affordable housing to buy and rent, but this would need work to understand any associated implications. In addition to this, he referred to the previously declared climate emergency and highlighted his hopes that Councillors could continue working together collaboratively when making decisions to positively contribute to the residents of Dorset.

In response, Cllr P Kimber thanked the Leader for his introductory speech and welcomed his commitment to the environment, he queried how Dorset Council would prioritise the safeguarding of nature. Cllr Ireland advised that he would be bringing forward a motion the next meeting of Council that would declare a nature emergency.

10. **Public Participation - questions**

There were five questions received from members of the public and these are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

11. **Public participation - petitions and deputations**

No petitions or deputations were received from members of the public.

12. **Questions from Councillors**

There were two Cllr questions, as appended to these minutes at Appendix B.

13. **Appointments to Committees, Joint Committees and Boards and election of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen**

The Director of Legal and Democratic 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 included an appendix that set out the proposed Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of ordinary committees for the forthcoming year, which set out two committees whereby the position of Vice-Chair would be contested.

Contested Positions

**Vice-Chair – People & Health Overview Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and Seconded by Cllr B Bawden that Cllr J Orrell be nominated as Vice-Chair for People & Health Overview Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr W Chakawata be elected as Vice Chair for People & Health Overview Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, Cllr Chakawata was duly elected as Vice Chair of the People & Health Overview Committee.

**Vice-Chair – Licensing Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr L Bown be nominated as Vice-Chair for Licensing Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr R Hughes and seconded by Cllr P Roper that Cllr L Fry be nominated as Vice-Chair for Licensing Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, Cllr Bown was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee.

**Decision**

1. That the allocation of committee seats in accordance with political balance rules, and the appointments to ordinary committees, joint panels, and boards, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2024/25 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 respectively;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal & Democratic, in consultation with the appropriate Political Group Leader, to make in-year changes to appointments;
3. That Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees be elected for the 2024/25 municipal year as set out in Appendix 4 and per the results of the contested votes.

14. **Appointments to Outside Bodies, Joint Bodies and Panels**

The Director of Legal and Democratic presented a report setting out the proposed appointments to Outside Bodies, Joint Bodies and Panels.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by A Canning

### Decision

1. That the appointment of councillors to national and significant bodies in Appendix 1 be approved.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with Group Leaders, to make appointments and fill vacancies where appropriate.
3. That the appointment of councillors to local member positions in Appendix 3 be approved.

### 15. Dispensations for Councillors

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out a proposal to grant a series of standing dispensations to enable members to take part in certain types of decision, where their participation might otherwise be questioned as a possible breach of the Council's Member Code of Conduct

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning

### Decision

That the following dispensations be granted until the ordinary date of elections in May 2029:

1. **To all members:** to take part in agreeing the budget and the setting of council tax but not where the interest is as the owner of an additional property and the decision to be made relates to any council tax premium on dwellings occupied periodically (second homes).
2. **To all members:** to approve the Member Scheme of Allowances.
3. **To all members appointed to represent the Council on outside bodies:** to remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
4. **To executive members appointed to the Shareholder Committees of Care Dorset and the Dorset Centre of Excellence:** to remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
5. **To any members appointed to the Board of Homes Dorset:** To remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
6. **To any members or reserve members appointed to the South West Audit Partnership Ltd Owners Board:** To remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.

16. **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented a report setting out the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee, which met on 15 April 2024 to consider the publication of Guidance to Councillors about the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr R Biggs and seconded by Cllr N Lacey-Clark

**Decision**

That Full Council endorses the publication of Guidance to Councillors about the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy.

17. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

18. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business

**Appendix A - Public Participation - Questions**  
**Appendix B - Questions from Councillors**

**Duration of meeting:** 6.30 - 7.39 pm

**Chairman**

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## Annual Meeting of Council

16<sup>th</sup> May 2024

### Public Participation – Questions from Members of the Public

#### Question 1: - Submitted by Martine Sommers

How can the MAF consider itself fit for purpose when it supplies a one sided almost utopian view of the barge, without considering the balanced and grown-up concerns of the people of Portland whose views are not met or being ignored. Example being costs of coaches and safety of personnel - i.e. CCTV. We are not interested in almost puerile and childish reports of 'hello's' whilst litter picking, which is a case in point.

#### Question 2: - Submitted by Kate Robson

Portland Port's & the Home Offices covert, non-consultive, under the table business transition to moor the Bibby Stockholm at Portland Port has probably been the most divisive decision ever made within Weymouth & Portland.

It serves no purpose and has failed to hit any of its objectives. It is NOT more cost effective nor is it a deterrent.

So disgusted with the lack of consultation, imposition and escalating costs. I have submitted my own FOIs to the HO.

- End Date of initial contract.
- Numbers on board
- Cost to date.

I was provided with the following information on the 7th May.

The contract is due to end on the 8th Jan 25'.

As of the end of January were 321 migrants on board.

The running cost paid to only CTM on 3rd April came to an extraordinary 12,900,000. This does not include grants for ancillary / authority service, police, voluntary grant or costs of HO staff.

The CTM contractual value alone equates to over £40K per migrant. Further insight into despicable rising costs is noted in the NAO investigation published 30/3 which determines; at a maximum capacity of 430 over 18 months cost to tax payer is 34.8M. Broken down this is near on 4.5K per month per head. Enough to go on an all-inclusive month-long cruise or rent a flat in Chelsea, or 3 bed house each in Sandbanks.

Hence and with relevance, my questions are around the motion put forward last year on the at DC full meeting on 13th July 'that the barge must be removed at 'the earliest opportunity' as every commentator agrees. I also request that allocation of spend of grants received by Dorset Council from the HO be made public.

1. On the 30th April within the last MAF update, it is stated that:  
No decision has yet been made on the future use of the Bibby Stockholm. The Home Office will continue to engage and work collaboratively with Dorset Council, Portland Port and Dorset Police to look at options for lease extension after January 2025'  
Please provide insight into these engagements and collaborations. And explain that if no decision has been made on the future use of Bibby Stockholm - why is DC currently recruiting for two full time social workers signposted to work primarily with asylum seekers located on Portland for the next 18 months? In addition, how can a possible extension be substantiated given the cost and failures?

### **Response to Questions 1 & 2 by Cllr Nick Ireland**

The use of the Bibby Stockholm barge to accommodate asylum seekers is not something that was sought or agreed to by the Council.

I have been newly elected as Leader this evening and I am not in a position to answer in any detail questions about how the Council and other agencies are responding together to the new burdens imposed by the Home Office decision.

At its meeting on 13 July 2023 the last Council agreed:

*"That the mooring of the barge in Portland Port is an entirely inappropriate location and should be removed at the earliest opportunity"*

and

*"That Dorset Council, while not the decision makers, will work with agencies to mitigate the impact this will have on Dorset."*

That is still this Council's position.

ANY FUTURE DECISION ABOUT THE USE OF THE BIIBY STOCKHOM IS ONE FOR THE HOME OFFICE AND NOT FOR DORSET COUNCIL. The ultimate solution, and key to the removal of the barge from Portland, is for Government to invest in the Home Office's Asylum process to remove the backlog and enable those who are successful in their application to contribute positively to UK society.



### **Question 3 – submitted by Edward Lock**

In view of the considerable time and resources invested in the last Draft Local Plan by both the Council and the public, will the new Council consider resurrecting that Draft Plan, possibly omitting any of the controversial strategic allocations.

### **Response to Question 3 by Cllr Nick Ireland**

Dorset Council's Local Development Scheme was adopted in March 2024 and this confirms that the Dorset Local Plan will be a new-style local plan prepared under the proposed reforms to the plan-making system. The key stages and likely timescales indicate that a project initiation document will be submitted towards the end of 2024, with consultation and engagement on the visioning and strategy envisaged to follow in May 2025. Whilst it will be a new-style local plan, the preparatory work done to-date will be used to inform the new-style local plan, but at this point in time the Council has not made any decisions about the form or content of the emerging plan.

Whilst the delay to the Local Plan is regrettable, it does give us the opportunity to ensure it includes all the sustainability, climate, environment, carbon neutral and many other policies that we don't have in the current inherited Local Plans.

### **Question 4 – submitted by Pat Rider**

What's DCC thoughts on this way of animal slaughter... I didn't realise that such thing is happening in the UK until recently... Is Dorset halal slaughter free? .. have the people of Dorset been asked about their thoughts on this? Or is this decision made for the people of Dorset without asking?

### **Question 5 – submitted by Mr & Mrs Caroll**

Can members of the New Dorset Council reassure us, the Taxpaying residents of Dorset that, permission will never be granted here for a HALAL SLAUGHTER house within the UNITARY area.

It is believed that some exist, although breaking the Law, in the North of England. This barbaric NON-STUN Islamic method of throat slitting whilst the animal is fully conscious simply cannot and will not be tolerated here in the farming areas of Dorset.

### **Response to questions 4 & 5 by Cllr Shane Bartlett**

In October 2015 the Government published guidance on how to legally carry out slaughter without stunning an animal, where this is necessary in accordance with religious rites. The guidance was updated in June 2023 in line with improvements to the welfare of animals.

The guidance is clear that all animals must be stunned before slaughter unless an animal is being slaughtered in accordance with religious rites.

Dorset Council in its capacity as the Local Planning Authority must consider all planning applications on their individual merits at the time of the application. Any decision needs to be based upon relevant material planning considerations irrespective of whoever the applicant is or what they are proposing.

## **Annual Meeting of Council**

**16 May 2024**

### **Questions submitted by Councillors**

#### **Question 1 – submitted by Cllr Bill Trite**

Since, at the full Council meeting on 13th February, a policy review of street lighting was promised from the Corporate Director for Highways in response to the serious night-time nuisance being caused to Swanage residents by the installation of street lights which are obviously much too harsh, intense and intrusive for the residential roads concerned, how much longer than the present three months will it be necessary to wait for this belated review?

#### **Response by Cllr Jon Andrews**

The previous Portfolio Holder for Highways requested that a review of the current street lighting policy be undertaken post-election. I will be asking that this is done as soon as practicable.

There are approximately 100 LED streetlights in Swanage that are affected by the concerns raised by residents. These lights are composites made from the outer shell and lens of the old low-pressure Sodium lights, retrofitted internally with LED lamps. This was done approximately two years ago by the Council's street lighting service provider, because the old Sodium lanterns had exceeded their operational life expectancy and replacement parts were no longer being manufactured. The result is that these lanterns have the light dispersing properties of the previous Sodium lanterns but with the light characteristics of an LED bulb.

These hybrid lights were compliant with all legal requirements at the time they were installed and continue to be so. However, following the advice on best practice that we have received from the Council's Director of Public Health, we have concluded that they should be replaced with the newer type of LED lantern that we are now using elsewhere in the county.

The newer lanterns are designed to direct light downward onto the highway, limiting light spillage outside the bounds of the highway or towards neighbouring properties and residences. This will significantly change the overall appearance of the lighting scheme. The newer lanterns also permit greater use of shields or shrouds to manage the throw of light from each individual lantern.

I have asked for the lanterns to be replaced as swiftly as possible.

Also I have asked the Director of Highways to instigate an independent review of the current Street Lighting operational impacts.'

## **Question 2 – submitted by Cllr Andrew Parry**

The rollout of a large-scale development in the heart of West Parley village, designed to accommodate the business model of a National Housebuilder, working with Planning Officers from Dorset Council, has from the community's perspective been abysmal. It is well documented that this scheme was against the wishes of the residents, West Parley Parish Council, and me as the Ward Councillor. But Officers were so keen to recommend the scheme for approval by the Eastern Planning Committee, that promises were made, including addressing traffic congestion in the area, this would have been one of the few upsides, to an otherwise highly questionable rolling back of greenbelt for development.

However, the area is now plagued by traffic chaos with gridlocks and longer tailbacks at peak times. Reports suggest housing units have been slow to find buyers, housing associations have declined the affordable units, the roads specification are too narrow to meet our adoptable standard, questions about the permanent water capture area, (which will almost certainly attract birds), constructed underneath the flightpath of the nearby Airport, remain unanswered by officers. Other matters that really should be reviewed include the double yellow line fiasco, delays in opening the new Lidl store and existing homeowners in the area, now reporting traffic vibrations inside their properties.

It remains unclear why Officers, were so eager to see this development approved? Locally we have no idea, because they have stopped responding to our requests to meet with us.

Therefore, I am seeking assurance that the new Portfolio Holders, CEO and Place Directors work with the Ward Councillor and Parish Council, to review all concerns and address them.

## **Response by Cllr Shane Bartlett**

Can I thank Cllr Parry for his question. I take the concerns he has raised very seriously and we are aware of the issues in West Parley. I hope he will appreciate I have only just been appointed as Portfolio Holder but I will agree to meet with you and Cllr Andrews, Portfolio Holder for Highways outside of the meeting, with the relevant officers to seek to understand the current situation.