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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023

Present: Cllrs Spencer Flower (Chairman), Gary Suttle (Vice-Chairman), Laura Beddow, Ray Bryan, Simon Gibson, Jill Haynes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Jane Somper and David Walsh

Cabinet Leads in attendance: Cllr Cherry Brooks, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones and Cllr Nocturin Lacey-Clarke

Also present: Cllr Molly Rennie, Cllr Shane Bartlett, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr David Gray, Cllr Rob Hughes and Cllr Carole Jones

Also present remotely: Cllr Mark Roberts, Cllr Kate Wheller and Cllr Gill Taylor

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Dawn Adams (Service Manager for Commercial and Procurement), Bridget Betts (Environmental Advice Manager), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Matthew Penny (Service Manager - Flood & Coastal Erosion), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure) and John Miles (Democratic Services Officer)

35. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

37. Public Participation

There were 2 public questions read out at the meeting from Cllr K Tippins and L Stevenson. As the lead petitioner in respect of min 40 and the "car parking review", Mr N Simms-Duff presented a petition on car parking charges in Weymouth. This had also previously been presented to Full Council at its meeting on 13 July 2023.

There were also 2 statements circulated to Cabinet in advance of the meeting and as a supplement to the agenda papers.

A copy of the questions and the detailed response is set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

38. Questions from Councillors

There was 1 question from Councillor K Wheller; this along with the response is set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

39. Forward Plan

The Cabinet Forward Plan for October was received and noted.

40. Parking Charges Review

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out a report that had come forward following a petition presented to Full Council on 13 July 2023. The petition was submitted by Mr Sims-Duff requesting that the new charges in Weymouth car parks (level 3) be reduced to match those of other Dorset Council towns. At that meeting Full Council decided that the petition should be referred to Cabinet for debate.

In presenting the report in response to the petition, the Portfolio Holder highlighted that parking charges prior to the local government reorganisation in 2019, differed vastly across the Dorset Council area. Work was carried out to align car parking charges which included stakeholder engagement throughout the strategy formation.

He further reported that the take up of parking permits had been good and hoped that more Dorset residents would invest in a permit going forward. He also reminded members that any funds from the parking charges were ringfenced and invested in highway usage only, emphasising that it was his responsibility to ensure that the council used the best avenue of income to support the highway service.

There was now a consistent charging approach across the Dorset Council area and charges were set following benchmarking with other coastal visitor destination car parks across the southwest. The report set out several tables showing: -

- the impact on parking revenue and consequent impact on service delivery, including the impact of the inclement weather.
- The impact on visitor numbers and car park usage and
- The impact on residents, businesses, and visitors.

Cabinet was advised that the report consisted of as much usage data as was currently available, however data from predecessor councils was extremely limited. The newly installed car park machines would be able to give better data going forward and every year the charges would be reviewed.

The Chairman invited non-executive members to ask questions of the Portfolio Holder. In response the Portfolio Holder confirmed

- that the only complaint received, regarding charges, had been from the petitioner, there had been comments, but not further complaints.
- Noted concerns regarding the three-tier approach, the above inflation levels, and the length of the current flexi permits. This could all form part of the annual review.
- Data relating to the flexi permit would be made available to members.
- Noted the request to change the winter charges by 2 weeks in response to the petition comments.
- Noted that the restricted mobility permit could form part of the review.

As part of the petitions process, Mr N Sims-Duff was given the opportunity to respond to the report.

Mr Sims-Duff advised that he was supportive of the councils need to create revenue, but this needed to be done fairly across the whole county. He considered that there was a lot of evidence that indicated that people were not happy with the current car parking charges in the Weymouth area. There had been 7,600 signatures expressing concerns that these higher charges were damaging Weymouth's economy, and this should be reduced. A day-long charge of £15 was unfair when compared to the price of a ticket in the market town car parks. He welcomed a review and hoped that the voice of Weymouth residents and visitors would be heard as part of that review.

The Portfolio Holder proposed the following recommendation (as amended).

“That Cabinet confirm that it would request Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee to review car parking charges within the context of the policy and, in particular to assess that the impact of the charges was consistent with the intentions of Cabinet when the decision was taken.”

In seconding the recommendation Cllr G Suttle indicated there was no clear evidence, at present, to support damage to Weymouth's economy because of an increase in car parking charges.

The Chairman invited Cabinet to debate the report and its recommendation. Members welcomed the report and the opportunity to review the charges in the future.

Decision

Cabinet confirmed that it would request Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee to review car parking charges within the context of the policy and, in particular to assess that the impact of the charges was consistent with the intentions of Cabinet when the decision was taken.

Reason for the decision

The decision was made at Full Council to debate the new charges with the view that if the evidence clearly showed a detrimental affect due to the car parking policy, then change would be recommended. Information had been gathered and presented in the report including: The consistency of charging Market comparison,

Parking revenue, Visitor numbers, and Impact on residents, businesses, and visitors

41. **Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Improvement and Strengthening**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment presented a report on proposed improvement and strengthening work for Weymouth Harbour Wall 4. The wall had reached the end of its life and must be reinstated or rebuilt for the Council to properly discharge its duty to the public, the harbour and the associated coastal sea defences.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the cost of the construction works was being funded by the Weymouth Waterside Regeneration Levelling Up bid funding.

In response to a question regarding the Wall 4(i) the Service Manager for Flood & Coastal Erosion confirmed that Wall 4(i) was included with in the stretch of work.

It was proposed by Cllr R Bryan and seconded by Cllr S Gibson

Decision

- (a) That the proposed repair, strengthening and raising of Wall 4, in accordance with the estimate set out in section 2 of the report, to meet the Council's obligations to maintain appropriate sea defences and harbour wall requirements, be agreed.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, to appoint a contractor through the Highways Partnership Term Contract to undertake the work.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Levelling Up, to approve construction related spend (following receipt of an acceptable quotation) with funds from the Levelling Up bid in terms of which £1.5m has been allocated to Wall 4 replacement.

Reason for the decision

The Weymouth Harbour Wall 4 Improvement and Strengthening project constitutes necessary work on a wall that had reached the end of life and must be reinstated or rebuilt for the Council to properly discharge its duty to the public, the harbour, and the associated coastal sea defences.

42. **The Stour Valley - Strategy and Memorandum of understanding**

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out a report on the Stour Valley – Strategy and Memorandum of understanding. The Stour Valley Strategy was a regionally significant opportunity to ecologically restore a river valley landscape, with potential to support health and well-being outcomes, access to nature and for local livelihoods for the c. 5000,000 people who lived near to it.

Members supported the project and noted the cost implications related to staffing resources within the respective partner teams. The current staff time in Dorset Council to deliver the project was 12 days a year.

It was proposed by Cllr R Bryan seconded by Cllr A Parry

Decision

- (a) That the Stour Valley strategy be endorsed, and that Cabinet supports it being included in the Dorset Council Local Plan.
- (b) Using a Memorandum of Understanding between its core partners of The National Trust, BCP Council and Dorset Council, that the Stour Valley partnership model be approved.
- (c) That core partners developing fund-raising bids to external grant bodies to assist delivery of the Stour Valley objectives, specifically DEFRA's Landscape Recovery Fund, be supported.
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment, for future decision making in relation to this project.

Reason for the decision

Adopting the partnership model provided continued governance and oversight of the project and ensures on-going delivery of the key aims and objectives. It also provided a strong platform to submit funding bids that would lead to more targeted delivery.

43. Dorset and BCP joint Local Transport Plan 4 development - Recommendation from Place & Resources Overview Committee

The Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment set out the recommendation from the Place and Resources Overview Committee on the development of the joint Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), that was required to set out a long-term vision for moving around Dorset safely and sustainably, making the strategic case for transport investment.

In proposing the recommendation, the Portfolio Holder made a minor amendment to recommendation (b) to include the wording "*after consultation with the*". The recommendation as amended was seconded by Cllr D Walsh

Decision

- (a) That the report and the comments of the Place and Resources Overview Committee on the approach for the development of the new joint LTP4, as set out in the minute extract of the meeting, be received, and noted.

- (b) That responsibility for the development of the new joint LTP4 be delegated to the Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment.
- (c) That the meetings of the Joint Governance Board be conducted openly and that councillors be able to attend meetings to listen to the discussion and ask questions.

Reason for the decision

The support the development of the new LTP4 and that decision making be delegated to the Corporate Director Economic Growth and Infrastructure for the development of the new joint LTP4 to ensure that decisions were effective and timely.

44. **Home in on Housing: Dorset Council's role and response for the new and emerging Housing Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing set out a report that provided information on the current and future housing landscape to support forthcoming discussions and decisions relating to budget setting and the new Housing Strategy in December 2023. The Housing Strategy consultation was in progress. The Strategy would be considered by People & Health Overview Committee in November, Cabinet in December with a recommendation to Full Council in February 2024.

The Corporate Director for Housing shared a PowerPoint presentation with Cabinet, and this is attached to these minutes at Appendix 3. The presentation aimed to inform members about the drivers of demand, the costs, the availability of stock and the narrative around addressing some of the need for Housing.

The Cabinet Lead for Housing spoke in support of the report and the need to establish a Housing Board. But there also was a requirement to do more to support and engage with private landlords.

The recommendations set out in the report were proposed by Cllr J Somper and seconded by Cllr L Beddow.

Decision

- (a) The Cabinet acknowledges and reinforces the important role of Housing as a key and cross-cutting priority within our Council Plan, understanding the current landscape, challenges, and the importance of maintaining and developing a robust plan to mitigate these pressures.
- (b) That the establishment of the Housing Board be approved, and Cabinet endorse its objectives and composition.

(This initiative would contribute significantly to our efforts in meeting the residential needs across multiple portfolios. This would also involve a Housing Programme Board, with involvement from Senior and Corporate

leadership roles to ensure delivery of objectives and effective implementation.)

Reason for the decision

Housing was one of the key priorities in the Dorset Council Plan and a priority for all Dorset Council residents.

The Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer) left the meeting for the following item. He returned for minute 46.

45. Additional Procurement Forward Plan 2023-24 and incorporating the refresh of the annual Modern Slavery Transparency Statement

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy presented a report on additional procurement activity, within the 2023-2024 procurement programme, which was known or likely to secure contracts exceeding the £500k (key decision) threshold as set out in the appendix to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation also asked cabinet to agree to the Modern Slavery Statement for 2022-23 which was published annually.

It was proposed by Cllr G Suttle and seconded by Cllr J Haynes

Decision

- (a) That the contents of the report in respect of the Additional Procurement Forward Plan for 2023-2024 and the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2022-2023, be approved.
- (b) That Cabinet agree to begin each procurement process listed in Appendix 1 to the report, and,
- (c) That in each instance the further step of making any contract award be delegated to the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder, after consultation with the relevant Executive Director.
- (d) That the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for 2022-2023 be published.

Reason for the decision

Cabinet was required to approve all key decisions with financial consequences of £500k or more. It was also good governance to provide Cabinet with a summary of all proposed procurements prior to them formally commencing. It was a requirement for the Council to publish a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement on an annual basis.

46. Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Value for Money (Unitary Council

Benefits)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy presented an information paper outlining some of the key financial achievements of Dorset Council since becoming a Unitary Council.

Cabinet and non-executive members had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the paper. The report is also attached at Appendix 4 to these minutes.

47. Portfolio Holder /Lead Member(s) Update including any Policy referrals to report

Portfolio Holder reports would be circulated to all members after the meeting.

48. Urgent items

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

49. Exempt Business

It was proposed by Cllr G Suttle seconded by Cllr A Parry

Decision

That in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and the public be excluded for the following item(s) in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Reason for taking the item in private

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The live streaming of the meeting was concluded at this juncture.

50. Lease of premises at the Old Radio Station

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets presented a report setting out a proposal to secure continued occupation by Dorset Council of the Old Radio Station Bridport Road, Dorchester.

Decision

That the recommendations set out within the exempt report be approved.

Reason for the decision

The proposed arrangements would allow the Council to continue its current occupation and deliver services from the Property at reduced cost.

Appendix 1 Public Questions, Statements and Responses

Appendix 2 - Councillor Question and Response

Appendix 3 - Home in on Housing - Power-point presentation

Appendix 4 - Dorset Council Plan Priorities Update: Value for Money (Unitary Council Benefits)

Duration of meeting: 10.00 am - 12.24 pm

Chairman

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Cabinet 5 September 2023

Public Questions

Question from Linda Stevenson

Evidence of people living or visiting Dorset Area who have seen information displayed in public spaces which this consultation relates too, and where I can view it, not just in public libraries, but public notice boards.

What actions did she take after the announcement in June 2023 apart from press statements which appeared in Dorset Echo, online or on social media.

Cllr Beddow appears to have no understanding of assistance for children, or families with assistance dogs who want to enjoy public spaces together.

No understand of the Equality Act 2010 which was sent to all councils in 2011

No understandings of people with protected characteristics who may have a hidden disability.

Makes no reference of the different types of assistance dogs who are officially trained to work with people with a wide range of disabilities.

Cllr Beddow shared information regarding health risks to the public, she failed to quote the NHS who see the risk from dogs as low, also failing to recognise Cats, both feral and domesticated, Foxes and Badger are also a source of infection, public spaces are open to all types of animals particularly rats who spread disease and are found in our town and countryside due to fast food litter, wildlife live in close proximity to humans.

Today's dog owners are only too aware of the need to seek regular treatments for their dogs from their vets, not just for public health but for the health of their family and friends, the children who live or visit their home.

Since 7th August 2023 I have been trying to reach Janet Moore and Jane Williams of the dog Warden Department, environmental health services who are involved in the creation of the Public Space Protection Order.

I've asked Cllr David Grey, Cllr Peter Barrow and the Democratic Services to help in gaining a response from the department responsible, to date I still haven't received a reply. The consultation closes on 24th August 2023 which gives little time for the public who are still unaware to take part

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities

Thank you for your question, Ms Stevenson

The Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order public consultation ran for just over 10 weeks, closing on the 25th August 2023. There were 4221 number of responses.

The Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order Public Consultation was promoted in accordance with our usual practice. This included

- A press release issued on 19 June 2023 to local media outlets (coverage in Dorset Echo, Lyme Online, Bridport News, and Bournemouth Echo)
- An article in Dorset Council News e-newsletter (sent to 27,115 recipients)
- An article in Dorset Council Town and Parish Council e-newsletter (sent to all Town and Parish councils in Dorset). Posters were also made available if the Town and Parishes wanted to display them in relevant locations.
- An article in Members Newsletter (sent to all Dorset Council members)
- 14 social media posts since 19 June (4 Facebook, 5 Twitter, 4 Instagram) – with a reach of 20,706 people.
- Briefing notes for Library Staff together with the posters to be displayed.

There has also been coverage on both regional and national TV and radio.

In addition, direct messages were sent to all Town and Parish Councils; other landowners such as the National Trust and Natural England, animal organisations such as the Kennel Club, Wildlife Trust, RSPCA, a local rescue centre, Dogs Trust and Dorset Dogs; Dorset Police and the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and organisations associated with Equality, Diversity and inclusion - Dorset Blind, MS Society, Dorset Stroke Organisation, Diverse Abilities, Access Dorset.

Direct messages were also sent to 117 residents who had either requested prior notification or with whom we had been in contact through the last consultation.

The Council has therefore used many avenues to promote the consultation. In doing so, it has tried to ensure that the reach was such so as to minimise the risk of bias for any particular outcome.

Assistance dogs are currently exempt from a number of requirements of the Order. Further information on this will be included in the promotional material for the new Order. The Council are working with Dorset Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel to agree the definition for an assistance dog which will be used in the wording of the new Order.

Question from Cllr K Tippins

The former Tourist Information Centre at 8 Bell Street in Shaftesbury has been empty since Feb 2023 and this building is owned by Dorset Council. Any building that is owned by the Local Authority in Shaftesbury, is of interest to the residents of this town, and as a Town Councillor, I am frequently asked about progress regarding this particular building. Currently, as a Councillor there has been no published data or information from Dorset Council sent to Town Council elected members regarding this buildings. I understand that the lease has now been terminated with the dissolved Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Company Ltd and the possession of the premises has reverted back to Dorset Council. In paragraph 21.2 of the Cabinet Papers in Nov 2020, it states that 'closer collaboration with Town and Parish Councils to share space and explore opportunities will be beneficial in driving down costs'...At Shaftesbury, the Town Council is the Corporate Body of 12 Councillors and the elected members have not been communicated with regards to the future of this space, but there has been a Dorset Council arranged meeting on

30th Aug 2023 which seemingly has bypassed the corporate body of elected members. Some Cllrs, myself included, have been specifically requested by residents to lobby Dorset Council, to ensure that a 'spin off' Tourist function will not be leased this building and Dorset Council are aware of this request. I am sure that there are other Town Council elected members are aware of strong feelings by residents about lobbying Dorset Council regarding occupancy of 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury. Cabinet may or may not be aware that the former Tourist Information volunteers, around 20 Shaftesbury residents, who used to occupy 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury, have now all successfully moved to be located next door in the Morrisons shop.

Please can I request that Cabinet ensures that the Town Council, the 12 elected members, are not bypassed and are truly involved in the future of 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury building in an open and transparent manner, as specified in the para 21.2 of the Nov 2020 Cabinet Papers?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets

The Council's tenant in Shaftesbury has gone into administration and in accordance with standard procedure, the property will now undergo a full condition and compliance survey with a view to carrying out improvements ahead of its future use. Part of that process will involve an options appraisal to determine the best use for the site and the Council is very keen to work with the town council and Cllrs to ensure the facility is not left unoccupied and provides a facility which meets the needs of the community. The Council has sought the support of Brie Logan, Town Clerk to provide informal key holding services to assist with consultant/contractor access.

Statement from G Hooper

I have read on google that you are going to review the new car park charges in Dorset in September and so I am writing in the hope that my - and I am sure the views of many other people - may be take into consideration.

I am a pensioner living in Sherborne. I, and anything up to four other friends used to enjoy coming down to West Bay three or four times a month as it is not so crowded as Weymouth and somewhere you can actually sit near to and hear the sea which cannot be done at Weymouth our nearest seaside town. I came down with a couple of friends in May and was quite shocked at the car parks charges. Because I have neuropathy in my feet and can sometimes not walk far I had to pay to park in two different car parks, one near our usual eatery on the front and then move to the park nearer the harbour and piers for shops and tea. I paid £9 in total. I have not been back to West Bay since but decided to go to the coast less and travel an extra half hour over the border to East Devon when I do so as the car park charges are cheaper - £8 pays for 24 hours so we can go down for the day without having to look at our watches.

We decided to leave West Bay until the Autumn but I now see that the parking charges will be in place until the end of October so will not bother to visit. I

understand that the Council are trying to catch the holiday makers but do you not think it would be a nice gesture to the people of Dorset to bring the parking charges down after they have returned in September? As residents of the county we are already paying the fifth highest council tax in the country. I did read some time ago that Dorset wanted to attract the 'right people' at the top with six figure salaries. Is this what we are paying for while services are cut and charges go up?

Think of the lost income to local businesses when the holiday makers have left. As one car load we would have paid for five meals three or four times a month at the Windy Corner Cafe and always ended up going into the small shops near the harbour and having tea there before we returned.

Much as I like West Bay I am quite happy to either carry on driving to East Devon or free parking in the National Trust car park and seeing the sea at Burton Bradstock but I think you need some forward thinking for the survival of the small businesses in West Bay.

Letter from Hannah Kearns - attached

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Lobster Pot (Portland Bill) Ltd

Portland Bill, Portland

Dorset DT5 2JT

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28 June 2007

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Council Offices
North Quay
Weymouth
Dorset
DT4 8TA

To Councillor Nigel Reed

RE Car Parking Charges at Portland Bill –Winter Rates

I write to the Borough Council to ask them to reconsider the winter car parking charges at Portland Bill. It has recently been drawn to my attention that a 2 hour parking charge will increase from 60p to £1.50 an increase of 150%. I note from the list of proposed charges published in the Echo that no other car park received a similar increase.

I have been the owner of the Lobster Pot since 1975, and in that time the business has changed considerably, culminating in the rebuild during the winter of 2002. I was urged to open the business all year round, and to that end I included air conditioning and heating in the new building so that I could open during the winter. I run a well regarded and professional business with a well trained staff, and I am proud to have earned a gold standard food safety award over the last three inspections. By opening all year I have been able to offer several members of staff a salaried position with job continuity rather than the seasonal opening that we used to operate.

Trading at Portland Bill during the winter is at best a “cover your costs” operation and after three years we have just managed to arrive at that position. During that period revenues at the car park must have increased because the Lobster Pot is open and it seems rather heinous to penalise a business which has already helped winter revenues. We rely totally on the car park for our customer base as there is no practical bus service and no alternative place to park and for practical purposes you can not walk there in winter. The cost of the car park affects us as a business like no other in the area, because there is no alternative. I understand as a council that raising revenue is a problematic and controversial area but I also believe a good council should help a local business where possible. I have no complaint at the increase in parking charges for the summer period, but I strongly believe a reduced rate in the winter could be levied to help us. Furthermore, I understand that a similar problem was identified at

the Nothe car park this year and remedial action was taken by the Council. The situation at the Nothe is very similar to that of Portland Bill, but at least the Nothe is close to the centre of town and has some alternative parking. I would ask the Council to be as sympathetic to our argument as they have been to those at the Nothe.

Since the publication of the new charges many of our regular customers who with out exception are local people have commented unfavourably on the new winter charge and have told us they are unlikely to come out to the Lobster Pot for a tea and scone due to an extra 90p being added to their bill which they cannot avoid paying.

I apologise that this letter has come late in the year, but as I provide eight annual season tickets for myself and staff, I do not use the parking meters where the proposed charges were advertised and I do not always pick up a Dorset Evening Echo. I do feel very strongly that the business is being treated very harshly and I would be happy to meet with any committee member who would be prepared to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Martin Brain
Director

CC Martyn Gallivan - WPBC
Derek Whittaker – WPBC
Christine James - WPBC
Louise Spain – Cluttons (agent for the Crown Estates)
Roland Reynolds – Court Leet

Lobster Pot (Portland Bill) Ltd

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31 August 2023

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
Council Offices
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To Councillor Ray Bryan

We are writing to yourselves as we have been advise by Elizabeth Dawson, the parking services manager, that our issue is beyond her remit and needs to be dealt with at committee level.

I enclose a copy of a letter that was written to the council in 2007 from ourselves outlining the issues we face at Portland Bill. Subsequently there has been an un written rule, that the Nothe Fort car park and Portland Bill have been treated equally until the last round of car parking charges published in 2023.

Currently, the parking charge at the Nothe is £1.50 for 2 hours against Portland Bill at £4.50, a huge difference. These large differences also apply to the winter rates leaving visitors at Portland Bill at a disadvantage. Moreover, in line with most other Weymouth and Portland Car Parks there is no charge between 6pm and 8 am unless you're at Portland Bill or Chesil Beach where standard charges apply 24 hours a day. Facing large increases in cost, we tried opening 2 evenings a week to increase turnover, however, the car parking charges killed it stone dead. If we were in Weymouth parking would be free. Portland Bill has no bus service other than the summertime fix charge tourist bus and visitors rely totally on the car park as the nearest car park to Portland Bill is a mile and a half walk. It appears to us that the tariffs are not being fairly applied and visitors to Portland Bill are treated differently to other areas of the borough. I find it difficult to understand the current difference between car parking at the Nothe and every other car park in the area.

We are experiencing a large increase in verbal abuse from customers who rail at us over the charges and to reduce costs they put 1 hour parking on their cars, and expect us to turn around a meal in that given period during the summer season.

We understand the council are facing increased financial pressures along with every local business, but we do not believe the current charges at Portland Bill are either fairly or evenly applied.

Yours sincerely

Hannah Kearns
Enc.

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Councillor Questions for Cabinet 5 September 2023

Question from Councillor K Wheller

There are accidents that are sadly that – unforeseen events that no-one could predict and therefore no mitigation measures can be taken.

And there are those which we all anticipate at some time and the risk of which can be reduced.

We in Weymouth as everywhere experience both but there are two I wish to highlight.

The traffic lights next to the Asda supermarket. Travelling along Westway Road to the lights there are three options – turn left on a filter with no light presents no problem; Straight across to Boot Hill on a green light requires vigilance but not essentially a problem . Turning right into Newstead Road towards Asda on a green light requires nerves of steel or ignorance.

Ignorance because despite having a green light indicating ‘ go, your way is clear’ – vehicles in two lanes travelling in the opposite direction also have a green light and believe the way is also clear for them. Locals have over the years since this design in 2012 become used to this hazardous junction, our population trebles in the summer with visitors. People do not expect to meet traffic coming towards them at speed when the green light indicates they can GO. I know roundabouts will not be reintroduced and for the most part the replacement traffic lights work in the other locations but please could engineers be instructed to look at this junction with some degree of urgency and find a way, it can't be rocket science, to create a designated filter light so that if you turn right on a green light you are not risking your life .

Portland Beach Road, despite promises to improve traffic safety in this location accidents still occur, some slight bumps but as recently some fatal. I know we are waiting for accident assessments and I am not pre-empting that. But we know that this road with its different speed limits and exits and entrances off is not potentially but actually a problem. There are a number of roundabouts along the road so that it would not require lengthy additional journeys to restrict exit from the businesses and car park preventing turning across fast moving traffic. Please can this be investigated, consulted on and hopefully implemented. I know that most road users would be pleased.

Finally, I have been in consultation with DCC and now DC engineers for many, many years, about the junction between Wyke Road and Portland Road next to All Saints Church. The mini roundabout installed in 2012 is not fit for purpose. There are never fatal accidents here because drivers exercise great caution but there frequent bumps. Most notably lorries hitting the historic wall. This wall is the responsibility of DC to repair and has to be repaired using specialist contractors which is costly. It is hit on average once a month. How much money could we save?

Please;

1. When I report it could it just be repaired without an inquest into whose responsibility the repair is every time ?
2. Could the work to design a better junction be a priority as it impacts upon the Portland to Dorchester Corridor. Instead the project drops

down just as it looks as though things are moving forward and money has been allocated?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Highways, Travel and Environment

In response to the request to create a filter light at the junction at the bottom of Boot Hill, Engineers have assessed this option and found that introducing a filter would mean holding North bound traffic on Boot Hill, resulting in longer queues. Queuing at Boot Hill is already an issue and the assessment's recommendation is not to introduce a filter sequence, as the additional queuing is likely to create a greater safety risk.

The junction was designed to relevant safety standards and the current system of giving way to oncoming traffic when under a green light is a requirement under the Highway Code.

Our Road Safety team monitors and analyses collision data and makes recommendations about where improvements will be most effective based on the evidence. There have been some collisions at this junction, and we will continue to monitor the situation, but it does not currently meet the threshold for action.

In response to Portland Beach Road, we express our deepest sympathy to all those affected by the very sad recent accident. There is an ongoing investigation, and we need to wait until the investigation is complete before we comment upon potential measures.

1. When I report it could it just be repaired without an inquest into whose responsibility the repair is every time?

The Council is aware of the damage to the wall and in conjunction with the Diocese, we are trying to establish ownership and liability for repairs. The Council is continuing to pursue the Diocese regarding ownership and if the wall turns out to be the responsibility of the Council, the ivy will be removed, and a full structural and condition survey will be carried out with a view to instigating a repair programme.

2. Could the work to design a better junction be a priority as it impacts upon the Portland to Dorchester Corridor. Instead, the project drops down just as it looks as though things are moving forward and money has been allocated?

I can confirm that this junction improvement is a priority and has been allocated funding. We have already implemented a new HGV route to reduce emissions at Boot Hill and this scheme is needed to make it easier for HGVs to navigate the bend. This is an essential part of our strategy to maintain access to Portland. The scheme will also create considerable improvements for pedestrians and people with poor mobility, including people attending church.

Options have been developed, but the final scheme design will depend upon land negotiations with the Diocese of Salisbury. This offers a potential solution to the issue of frequent vehicular collisions with the wall by enabling the relocation the wall away from the highway. We will be approaching the diocese shortly.

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Home in on Housing: Dorset Council's role and response for the new and emerging Housing Strategy

Briefing deck
September 2023

Housing & its role for Dorset

Housing is a fundamental need for our residents. As a Housing Authority, Dorset Council has a range of statutory responsibilities including the prevention and relief of homelessness and implementing strategies to meet housing need, enable new homes to be built and improve housing standards.

Dorset is a non-stock holding council. We are a strategic housing authority with an enabling function.

Our role is to support our Registered Providers of Social Housing (Housing Associations) to deliver new homes. We do this by:

- securing and deploying government grants - **with many millions of pounds levered in to support new homes**
- identifying suitable development sites and working with Registered Providers and developers to bring them forward
- helping to provide new affordable homes and specialist accommodation on private and council owned land
- supporting landlords to let their homes and maintain good standards. Enforcing when poor conditions exist.

Our role in housing also includes to:

- coordinate and commission on crosscutting issues. For example, homelessness prevention, improving health and wellbeing, supported housing, decarbonisation, maintaining good housing standards across tenures
- lead and coordinate safe accommodation and support for survivors of domestic abuse.



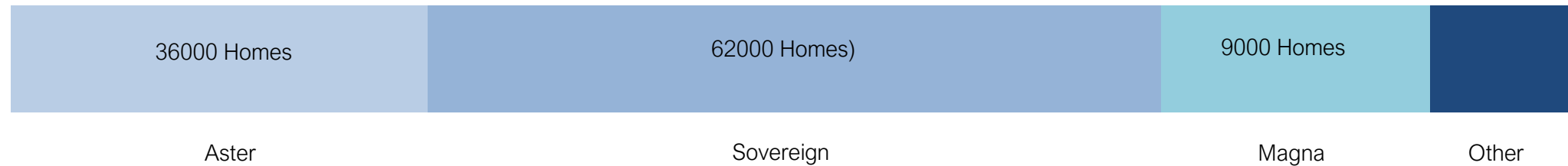
Housing is one of the five main strands of the Council's Plan.

Registered Providers in Dorset

At present there are 20,000 affordable homes provided in the Dorset Council area. This is bolstered by an active development programme, with 664 new homes added to this number last year. There is a range of Registered Providers of Social Housing (Housing Associations) with the three largest stockholders being Aster, Sovereign & Magna, and who took transfer of the former Council Housing stock of the former Districts and Boroughs. These three Registered Providers are also national, not just local to Dorset. There are other housing associations who also provide homes in Dorset including East Boro, Abri, Places for People, Sage Homes and Stonewater Homes.

The graphics below show the financial performance of the three large Registered Partners, including their Housing stock numbers.

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Why is Housing important?

Housing is a fundamental aspect of individual and community well-being, and its quality and stability have a profound impact on physical and mental health outcomes. Addressing housing issues is essential for promoting health equity and improving overall population health. The impact of housing on the natural environment and the wider drive towards decarbonisation is significant – emphasising the importance of good design, energy efficiency and well managed housing.

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Housing plays a vital role in:

- promoting physical and mental well-being
- preventing poor physical and mental health
- fostering community cohesion
- supporting economic stability
- reducing health disparities
- contributing to individual and societal development, leading to healthier and happier lives

Housing supports delivery on the ICP Strategy. Poor Housing conditions are associated with a number of health problems, including respiratory infections, asthma and poor mental health.



Housing is one of the [Social determinants of health](#)



Housing is key in delivering the ICP Strategy

Three strands of demand

Housing is seeing an **increase in demand, increases in costs and a lack of available suitable accommodation.**

The three main demand drivers for Housing are:

- Homelessness – with the need to provide temporary accommodation when prevention has not been possible
- Housing Register, for other areas of housing need
- Associated need for Housing from other statutory services – Social Care, Health, Probation, Refugee resettlement. Non-statutory demand is also rising – key workers, first steps into home ownership, etc.

Demand Drivers

Population

Population growth in Dorset has risen by 15,000 in the last 10 years to 380,000 and is expected to rise to 400,000 by 2030.

Housing is an important priority for all residents within Dorset.

Cost of Living

Economic pressures in recent years have seen more households come into financial hardship and require Housing support from the Council.

Homelessness

We have seen increasing demand in people presenting as homeless. In the 21/22, we had 3408 homelessness approaches and 3996 in 22/23

We are forecasting a 23/24 year end total of 4755 approaches (19% increase from last year)

Temp Accom.

Currently, we have 334 households in temporary accommodation, of which 88 are in bed and breakfast. The total cost of temporary accommodation for 22/23 was £4.512m, 40% higher than it was for 21/22.

Affordable Housing

There is a lack of affordable housing in Dorset. The average house price is 11x times higher than the national average salary, with many second homes and holiday lets.

We are receiving 400 new applicants per month for the Housing register.

Migrant/Refugee

We are delivering a programme to acquire temporary accommodation to use initially for Ukrainian and Afghan households.

Inflation

Inflationary pressures are a cost driver for the service. The average B&B placement now costs £560 – this has doubled from last year

The Local Housing Allowance rate is frozen, so any increase in temporary accommodation is an additional cost.

Debt

The expensive nature of temporary accommodation and bed and breakfast means that there is the reality of debt occurring, with £500k of unrecoverable debt being forecast for this financial year.

Solving the problem



Introduction to the Housing Strategy

Dorset is a popular place to live, visit and to retire to, with many second homes, and holiday lets. This create pressures on the local housing market.

With national pressures on affordability, this has put owning a home out of reach for many working age residents. This is also challenging for our younger residents, wanting to return to the area after further education outside of Dorset.

Our emerging Housing strategy seeks to identify ways to balance these pressures. These are reflected in the 4 key objectives which set out our aims to:

- increase the supply of housing to meet the demand for homes
- increase access to housing which meets a diverse range of needs
- make the best use of council owned land and properties, for housing
- create a one-council approach to the provision of homes
- reduce the financial impact of emergency homelessness accommodation
- increase temporary accommodation to meet homelessness demand
- drive improvements to the quality of Dorset housing
- work with partners to improve access to housing
- support our partners to make the best use of existing stock
- reduce the impact of housing on our climate
- identify funding opportunities to achieve our aims
- support our rural communities

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Our new Housing Strategy is [currently out to consultation](#), and we will be ready to bring back a compelling, bold and ambitious strategy to our December Cabinet.

Housing Strategy – key objectives

Housing Need

Enabling residents to live safe, healthy, independent lives in homes that meet their needs.

Provide a selection of housing and support services that promote healthy, safe, and independent lives.

Housing Supply

Driving the delivery of homes people need and can afford to live in.

We aim to increase the supply of high quality affordable and social housing, to buy or rent.

Housing Standards

Improving the quality, standard, and safety of homes.

Prevention of Homelessness

Support, at the right time, to people in crisis to prevent homelessness.

Tackling homelessness by providing support and assistance to help people find suitable long-term housing solutions.

Governance – establishment of a Housing Board

The scale of our ambition for Housing requires a cross-Council and multi-agency approach. As part of that, it is proposed to create a Housing Board composed of Portfolio Holders for Housing, Adults and Public Health, Property and Assets, Finance and Children's Services.

The Housing Board aims to:

- Collaboratively address the diverse residential needs encompassing these portfolios.
- Working together on decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic planning, ultimately enhancing the quality of housing and residential services provided to our community.

The Housing Board's primary objectives include:

- Collaboration: Facilitating communication and cooperation to address residential needs more effectively.
- Strategic Planning: Developing cross-Council strategies that consider the housing continuum from child to adult, encompassing diverse needs and life stages.
- Resource Optimisation: Enhancing resource allocation efficiency by working together on budgeting and planning to avoid duplication and make best use of resources.
- Innovation: Encouraging innovative approaches to housing challenges by leveraging insights and experiences from multiple portfolios.
- Community Impact: Improving the quality of housing and residential services to positively impact the lives of our residents.

There will also be an Officer Board to prepare and oversee the operational delivery of the Housing programme.

Cabinet Considerations

- i. Cabinet acknowledges and reinforces the important role of Housing as a key plank of our Council Plan. This understands the current landscape, challenges, and the importance of maintaining and developing a robust plan to mitigate these pressures.
- ii. The Cabinet is asked to approve the establishment of the Housing Board and endorse its objectives and composition. This initiative will contribute significantly to our efforts in meeting the residential needs across multiple portfolios. This will also involve a Housing Programme Board, with involvement from Senior and Corporate leadership roles to ensure delivery of objectives and effective implementation.

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Following the current consultation period, and having taken on board the responses, we will return to Cabinet in December 2023 with a compelling, bold and ambitious Housing Strategy.

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Dorset Council Plan Priorities update – Value for Money (Unitary Council benefits)

Cabinet – 5 September 2023

Portfolio Holder update from Cllr Gary Suttle

Brief Summary: This report outlines some of the key financial achievements of Dorset Council since becoming a Unitary Council and improved value for money for the local tax payer.

1. Award of grants

- 1.1 One of the ways Councils can make limited resources go further and reduce the need for local taxation is through active pursuit of external funding opportunities. These opportunities are often competitive processes require bidders to put forward ambitious ideas and demonstrate a commitment to delivery in accordance with the scheme criteria. Successfully bidding helps to accelerate and unlock improved outcomes for those that live, work and invest in Dorset.
- 1.2 For the period 2020/21 to 2023/24 Dorset Council has received **£101.3m** of grant funding, rising to **£121.6m** based on future year commitments the life of the current grants.
- 1.3 Projects contained within this include:
 - DSG Safety Valve **£42m**
 - Levelling Up Fund (LUF) – Weymouth Regeneration **£19.5m**
 - Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - Main Grant **£18.8m**
 - DfT Transforming Cities Fund **£14.2m**
- 1.4 More detail, including the profile of grant income is included in appendix 1.

2. Sustainable service delivery

- 2.1 Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires Council's to set a balanced budget each year. The Council's ability to set and deliver on a balanced budget each year demonstrates one of the ways Dorset Council meets the

- principles set out in CIPFA's Financial management code and can demonstrate sustainable service planning and delivery.
- 2.2 Since becoming a unitary council in 2019, Dorset Council has made savings of £76.6m by restructuring staff, and re-designing how services are provided. This money has been reinvested into frontline services, including funding the growing need for adult social care due to our ageing population.
 - 2.3 The total savings achieved rises to £96.4m when considering the savings identified as part of setting the budget for 2023/24.
 - 2.4 The Council's budget setting process includes cross-party working groups to appraise the budget and identify new opportunities to improve value for money as well as public consultation and Political scrutiny of the draft budget.
- 3. Appendices**
- 3.1 Appendix 1 – Grant income
 - 3.2 Appendix 2 – Savings profile

Appendix 1 – Grant income

Type of grant funding	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Future year allocations	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
DSG Deficit Safety Valve agreement	0	17,500	6,250	6,250	12,000	42,000
New Burdens for New Statutory Domestic Abuse Duty	0	651	653	666	678	2,647
Homelessness Domestic Abuse New Burdens Funding	0	11	27	42	61	142
Private Rented Sector Compliance & Enforcement Competition - Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)	0	98	0	0	0	98
Capacity and Productivity				167		167
LGA Cyber Grant Fund	13	0	0	0	0	13
DLUHC Cyber Support Fund	0	100	0	0	0	100
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - Skills Fund	209	71	0	0	0	280
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme - Main Grant	18,792	0	0	0	0	18,792
Low code digital waste services			350		0	350
Homes for Ukraine grant			9,352		0	9,352
Safer Streets 3		380			0	380
Safer Streets 4			186	61	0	247
Levelling Up Fund (LUF) - Weymouth Regeneration	0	0	3,948	8,010	7,510	19,468
DfT re Mini Holland	0	0	79	0	0	79
Active Travel (Capital)	351	0	225	0	0	576
Active Travel (Revenue)	88	35	0	0	0	123
DfT Capability Fund Award	0	69	0	0	0	69
DfT Capability Fund Award	0	15	0	0	0	15
DfT Capability Fund Award	0	35	0	0	0	35
LTP Capacity Grant	0	179	0	0	0	179
DfT Electric Vehicle Charging Points (ORCS)	0	0	94	0	0	94
DfT LEVI Capability Fund	0	0	68	0	0	68
DfT Bus Capacity Grant	0	0	171	0	0	171
OEZEV Levi Fund Local EV Infrastructure	0	0	0	1,020	0	1,020
Active Travel Capability	0	0	136	1,978	0	2,114
DfT Transforming Cities Fund (TCF)	1,453	5,501	3,425	3,866	0	14,245
DEFRA Local Nature Recovery Strategies Local Capacity Seed Funding	0	16	33	0	0	49
DEFRA S.31 Grant for Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain for England LPA's	0	20	43	0	0	64
Ukraine and Afghanistan Refugee Housing			0	4,571		4,571
Accommodation for Ex Offenders				60		60
ESFA - Home for Ukraine			2,090			2,090
Family Hubs			419	582		1,000
Digital Future Councils Grant			750			750
Changing Places Grant			184			184
Total	20,906	24,680	28,482	27,272	20,250	121,590

Appendix 2 – Savings profile

Savings	£m 2019/20	£m 2020/21	£m 2021/22	£m 2022/23	£m 2023/24	£m Total
Service Efficiencies - Adults	(4.5)	(1.2)	(7.5)	(3.4)	(6.8)	(23.4)
Service Efficiencies - Children's	(3.0)	(1.6)	(4.6)	(4.3)	(3.9)	(17.4)
Fees and Charges		(1.7)	(2.5)	(3.5)	(4.4)	(12.1)
Staffing & Organisation	(5.2)	(2.0)	(1.6)	(1.1)	(1.0)	(10.9)
Service Efficiencies - Central Finance			(6.0)	(2.5)	(1.9)	(10.4)
Service Efficiencies - Place	(1.4)	(1.1)	(3.6)	(1.2)	(1.8)	(9.1)
Service Efficiencies - Corporate Development & Legal	(2.5)	(0.8)	(1.6)	(1.3)		(6.1)
Transformation, Procurement and Contract Management		(6.0)				(6.0)
Internal/External Audit	(0.2)	(0.0)	(0.3)	(0.0)		(0.6)
Democratic Representation	(0.4)					(0.4)
TOTAL	(17.2)	(14.4)	(27.7)	(17.2)	(19.8)	(96.4)