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CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Cllrs Nick Ireland (Chair), Richard Biggs (Vice-Chair), Jon Andrews, Shane Bartlett, Simon Clifford, Ryan Hope, Steve Robinson, Clare Sutton, Gill Taylor and Ben Wilson

Apologies: There were no apologies for absence

Also present: Cllr Andrew Parry, Cllr Belinda Bawden, Cllr Beryl Ezzard, Cllr Bill Trite, Cllr Craig Monks, Cllr Gary Suttle, Cllr Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Louie O'Leary, Cllr Neil Eysenck, Cllr Matt Bell, Cllr Peter Dickenson, Cllr Rob Hughes, Cllr Ryan Holloway, Cllr Sherry Jespersen, Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Simon Gibson and Cllr Steve Murcer

Also present remotely: Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Bridget Bolwell, Cllr Byron Quayle, Cllr Carole Jones, Cllr Cathy Lugg, Cllr Chris Kippax, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr David Morgan, Cllr David Northam, Cllr Jack Jeanes, Cllr Jane Somper, Cllr Jill Haynes, Cllr Jon Orrell, Cllr Kate Wheller, Cllr Laura Beddow, Cllr Paul Kimber, Cllr Ray Bryan, Cllr Richard Crabb, Cllr Stella Jones and Cllr Sally Holland

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

Jan Britton (Executive Director for Places Services), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Jonathan Price (Executive Director of People - Adults and Housing), Alice Deacon (Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships), Mark Tyson (Corporate Director for Adult Commissioning & Improvement), Andrew Billany (Corporate Director for Housing), Lisa Cotton (Corporate Director for Customer and Cultural Services), Amanda Davis (Corporate Director for Education and Learning), Paul Dempsey (Executive Director of People - Children), Steven Ford (Corporate Director for Strategy, Performance and Sustainability), Julia Ingram (Corporate Director for Adult Social Care Operations), Graham Duggan (Head of Community & Public Protection), Ed Carter (Weymouth Harbour Master), Heather Lappin (Head of Strategic Finance), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Nina Coakley (Head of Change), Richard Conway (Service Manager for Housing Standards), Philip Crowther (Legal Business Partner - Regulatory), Sarah Crabb (Social Mobility Commissioner) and Terry Sneller (Strategic Planning Manager)

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

James Potten (Communications Business Partner - Place)

Statement by the Chair

The Chair made the following statement in respect of the Wareham Pedestrian Level Crossing: -

I have listened to the views that have been expressed by Wareham Town Council, the local ward members and many others. Following a meeting today with Vikki Slade, MP for Mid Dorset and Poole, I have agreed to defer this paper to enable her to meet with the Office of Road and Rail to finally bottom out the realistic options for the level crossing.

66. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

67. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

68. Public Participation

There was 1 question from a member of the public. A copy of the question and the response is set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

69. Questions from Councillors

There were 4 questions submitted by Cllr Craig Monks and Cllr Belinda Bawden; these along with the responses are set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

70. Forward Plan

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for December 2024 was received, and it was noted that in a change to the published plan the report 'Purbeck Pleasure Boat Byelaw 2013 amended' would be submitted direct to the Full Council meeting on 5 December 2024.

71. September 2024 (Period 6) financial management report 2024/25

Cabinet received a report that set out information about the council's forecast financial performance for the full 2024/25 financial year. The forecasts were based on data as of 30th September 2024 (Quarter 2). The Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy highlighted the significant financial challenges facing Dorset Council due to increasing costs and he acknowledged the concern over the proposed use of council reserves.

In response to questions from Cllr A Parry, Paul Dempsey, Executive Director of People – Children's agreed to send Cllr A Parry a full written response regarding the EHCP and the spot purchasing figures.

It was proposed by Cllr S Clifford and seconded by Cllr R Biggs.

Decision

- (a) That the Senior Leadership Team's forecast of the full year's outturn for the Council, made at the end of September 2024 including progress of the transformational and efficiency savings incorporated into the budget be noted.
- (b) That the capital programme for 2024/25, be noted.
- (c) That the capital spend of £3.45m against Sewerage Treatment Services Improvement Works as agreed by Capital Strategy & Assets Management Group on 7 October 2024, be noted.
- (d) That the additional capital spend of £2.8m for Weymouth Harbour Walls F&G of which £1.3m to be funded from Dorset Council resources and £1.48m from Harbour reserves, be approved (subject to harbour advisory committee). *A detailed breakdown was shown in the appendix which brings total project spend to £13.8m.*
- (e) That the additional capital spend of £1.0m for Foster and Kinship Carers Adaptations Capital Fund, be approved.
- (f) Reallocate the budget of £160k from Parkdean improvement works to Greenhill.
- (g) To continue procurement to deliver Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) Transformation programme – part 2 with an expected value of £9m, of which Dorset Council was committing to up to £1.5m with a further step of making any contract award and finalising the partnership agreement with NHS partners being delegated to the relevant Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, after consultation with the relevant Executive Director, Jonathan Price, Cabinet Member for Finance and Capital Strategy, Cllr Clifford and Executive Director for Corporate Development (s151 officer), Aidan Dunn.

Reason for the decision

The Council provided a mix of statutory and discretionary services to communities across Dorset and was legally required to set a balanced budget every year, and so must deliver services within the resources made available through the revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25. This report summarised the Council's forecast financial performance for the year at the end of September 2024.

72. **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget strategy**

The report provided detail on a framework for the budget for 2025/26 and the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025-2030 and outlined the work which would continue throughout the autumn so that the budget could be finalised in time for the Full Council meeting in February 2025. It was noted that the budget setting exercise was taking place against a continued background of national and global events which were putting a direct and indirect pressure on council budgets.

The recommendations were proposed by Cllr S Clifford and seconded by Cllr J Andrews.

Decision

That Cabinet:

- (a) notes the updated cost pressures set out in the paper and the validation work that had been carried out on them;
- (b) agrees/updates the assumptions being used in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP);
- (c) notes the financial gap arising from (a) and (b) above.
- (d) agrees the 2025/26 principles for budget setting as outlined in section 13 of the report to Cabinet 19 November 2024.
- (e) notes the approach to closing the budget gap set out in the paper of 19 November, recognising that this was work in progress.
- (f) continues to lobby local MPs and work with peers to press the case for additional, multi-year funding.
- (g) agrees that Cabinet Members work with officers to continue to identify and develop further efficiencies and savings.
- (h) endorses the next steps and timetable leading up to the 2025/26 budget which would be presented to Full Council on 11 February 2025.

Reason for the decision

Councils are required by law to set an annual budget and for that budget to be 'balanced' or fully funded. Essentially this means that expenditure was balanced by income without unsustainable use of one-off, or short-term sources of finance.

73. **Draft Council Plan 2024-2029**

The Council Plan had been drafted to provide visible accountability for performance, risk management, and to shape how Dorset Council would be adapting to a changing world over the next five years. The updated draft plan provided the 'golden thread' for the work of officers to ensure that the council was delivering against priorities of the administration. The draft plan had been reviewed by the Joint Overview Committee on 29 October 2024 and the committee had made a few recommendations; the draft plan had been updated as a result for Cabinet consideration.

In response to a question from Cllr O'Leary the Leader of Council requested that officers send Cllr O'Leary information on the verge management schedule.

Cllr S Gibson highlighted that highways were a priority for Dorset residents and felt that this should be better reflected in the new Dorset Council Plan. Cllr K Wheller also highlighted that the potential for economic growth from harbour and marine businesses did not feature in the new plan. The Leader of Council reminded

members that not every service could be included in this high-level document however agreed to take the comments from Cllr Gibson and Cllr Wheller into account before the document was submitted to Full Council for final approval. It was also noted that there may be some additional amendments to the plan following a late response from the LEP.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland, seconded by Cllr S Robinson.

Recommendation to Council

That the updated draft Council Plan for 2024-29 be adopted.

74. Our Future Council Outline Business Case and Draft Transformation Plan

Cllr B Wilson, Cabinet Member for Corporate Development and Transformation introduced a report that set out the ambition and outline business case for the transformation of Dorset Council under “Our Future Council”. The report set out the plans to develop a full invest to save business case early in 2025. Our Future Council was an extensive, whole council transformation programme and was a crucial component of the new Council Plan for improving outcomes for residents and organisational efficiency as well as being vital for future financial resilience.

Decision

- (a) That the ambition, approach and scope for the Our Future Council transformation programme be approved, and plans to progress to a full business case, be endorsed. *This would be presented to Joint Overview Committee for feedback and Cabinet for approval in January 2025.*
- (b) That the draft transformation plan, target operating model design, governance plans and draft delivery plans for whole-council transformation, be endorsed (appendix B) *The final versions would be presented Joint Overview Committee for feedback and Cabinet for approval in January 2025.*
- (c) That authority be delegated to Executive Director for Corporate Development to commission strategic advisor, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, (PwC) to the value of £520,000 to deliver a full business case with investment and implementation plans.
- (d) That authority be delegated to Executive Director for Corporate Development, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Finance & Capital Strategy, to replenish and approve use of the transformation fund allocated from capital and revenue reserves of £3m to be made available to support invest to save transformation activity.

Reason for the decision

Dorset Council was facing significant financial pressures and increasing demand for services, a challenge common to many local authorities. To address this, we must undertake a comprehensive, whole-council transformation to ensure sustainable and effective service delivery.

75. Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy

The Cabinet received a report which proposed a policy that set out the conditions and eligibility criteria for financial assistance to improve private sector housing. The policy had been considered by the People & Health Overview Committee on 29th October 2024.

Decision

1. That the Dorset Council Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be adopted.
2. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director Housing and Community Safety in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and Housing to:
 - (a) Make minor amendments to the policy to comply with legislation and guidance.
 - (b) Suspend the approval of any discretionary housing assistance offered in this policy.
 - (c) Introduce new assistance to help private residential property should funding become available.

Reason for the decision

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 required Councils to publish a policy if they wished to provide assistance in a range of areas related to private sector housing. Dorset Council last approved a Private Sector Housing Assistance policy in November 2020.

76. Dorset Council Contaminated Land Strategy

The Cabinet was asked to approve the Dorset Council Contaminated Land Strategy 2024 which replaced, updated and unified the predecessor councils' individual strategies and would ensure that Dorset Council's role in relation to land affected by contamination continued to reflect current law and good practice. The policy would ensure that risks from land contamination to human health, property and the environment would continue to be appropriately and efficiently managed.

Decision

That the Dorset Council Contaminated Land Strategy be approved.

Reasons for the decision

The Strategy ensures that the Council continues to meet its land contamination regulatory duties in a manner which was rational, ordered and efficient, and reflective of Dorset's local circumstances.

77. Dorset SACRE Common Agreed Syllabus

Cllr C Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education & Skills introduced the Dorset Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. If approved by Cabinet the final design would be a small working group of officers and members to discuss the practical concerns raised by Cllr J Atwal and Cllr L Bown.

Decision

That, subject to some minor amendments, the Dorset SACRE syllabus be approved to enable teaching and learning from Autumn Term 2025.

Reason for the decision

So, the formal agreed Dorset locally Agreed Syllabus can be shared with all our schools and academy settings.

78. Designing out severe hardship and improving social mobility in Dorset

The Cabinet considered a report which set out the council's approach to improving social mobility. In response to a query from Cllr D Northam regarding the indices for deprivation used in the report Cllr Sutton acknowledged his view, however felt that a change in the wording of the document was not required. In response to a question from Cllr H Hobbs-Chell, Alice Deacon, Corporate Director for Commissioning and Partnerships agreed to look at how the information could be shared with the voluntary sector and agreed to take on board the comments raised by councillors to inform the work.

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton, seconded by Cllr S Robinson

Decision

That a cross-directorate and multi-agency taskforce be established, with the purpose of improving social mobility, reducing poverty, and ensuring cohesive responses across the Council and with wider partners.

This would: -

- Revisit the recommendations made to the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee in the paper 'Social Mobility in Dorset', November 2021 and use this to inform the taskforce membership suggested in Appendix two of the report to Cabinet 19 November 2014.
- Define and agree future actions as suggested in Appendix two.

- Develop local data insights and analysis to inform and refine our approaches at both community and authority level.
- Implement relevant recommendations at a local level from the national Social Mobility Commission's annual reports.
- Report progress annually.

Reason for the decision

Working to reduce inequalities was not a one-off piece of work; improving life chances for all was already what we strive to do and was woven throughout our various strategies and long-term plans. This approach brought together all our ambitions to ensure we were moving collectively towards reducing poverty and improving social mobility as business as usual for Dorset Council.

The challenges were complex and could not be held by any one directorate or organisation. These were deep rooted socio-economic structural issues that warrant a considered, coordinated, and long-term response.

79. **Weymouth Harbour - Future Development and Open Port Duty Report**

Cllr J Andrews introduced a report which proposed the modification of the Harbour's Open Port Duty to allow for commercial development opportunities in line with the Council's Government funding (previously known as the Levelling Up Fund) commitments.

It was proposed by Cllr J Andrews seconded by Cllr S Clifford

Decision

- (a) That an application be made to the Marine Management Organisation for a Harbour Revision Order in respect of Weymouth Harbour to restrict the Open Port Duty
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Executive Lead for Place Services, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Place Services, to determine the wording of the Harbour Revision Order based on legal advice and to undertake all procedures for the submission of the Harbour Revision Order to the Marine Management Organisation.
- (c) That a budget of £40,000 be allocated for the work set out in (a) and (b) above from Harbours Reserves.

Reason for the decision

The decision allows Weymouth Harbour to:

- Develop the Peninsula in line with the Harbour Business Plan and the Government funding commitments, which included public space enhancements, commercial developments, and housing.

- Reduce the financial and operational burden imposed by the unrestricted Open Port Duty, which currently required the harbour to accommodate large commercial vessels that were no longer viable or necessary for future growth.
- Secure long-term financial sustainability through commercial opportunities aligned with the Government funding programme.

80. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

81. **Exempt Business**

Decision

That the press and the public be excluded for the following three items 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 was concluded at this juncture.

82. **Nitrogen Reduction in Poole Harbour SPD - Outstanding mitigation liability**

It was proposed by Cllr S Bartlett seconded by Cllr S Clifford.

Decision

That the recommendations set out in the exempt report of Cabinet 19 November 2024, be approved

Reason for the decision

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) required the Council to assess the impacts of new development on habitats sites and to only grant planning permission where it had concluded through an appropriate assessment that adverse impacts would be avoided or mitigated.

83. **Dorset Innovation Park Management Options**

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

Decision

That the recommendations set out in the exempt report of 19 November 2024, be approved.

Reason for the decision

To decide on the Dorset Innovation Park Management Options

84. County Hall co-location opportunity

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

Decision

That Cabinet approves the proposal and authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Place, to complete the necessary legal documents to give effect to the above, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Assets & Property.

Reason for the decision

To decide on co-location opportunities at County Hall.

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.25 pm

Chairman

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Cabinet – 19th November 2024

Public Participation – Questions from the public

1. Question from David Redgewell Southwest Transport Network, Dorset catch the bus campaign

With the Dorset bus service improvement plan and the need to improve bus and coach services.

With the start of the school term

The Charmouth Primary school. School bus contract was awarded from Go ahead group South coast buses Damory coaches to ECT group of London Dorset community transport company.

But with no provision to provide the linked service 71 Lyme Regis Town service funded by Lyme Regis Town Council.

With a 16 seater bus by DCT why was this Tender not discussed with Lyme Regis Town Council and the stakeholders and passengers groups or at the public Transport forum of West Dorset Transport action Group.

and also With the Tupe arrangement RMT bus drivers were not transferred to Dorset community transport company.

So as the Lyme Regis Town Council want to continue this service especially passengers who have difficulties climbing the hills in Lyme Regis and those with reduced mobility and partly sighted passengers.

What discussions are now taking place with Lyme Regis Town Council and ECT GROUP Dorset community transport company to provide a bus for the Lyme Regis Town service for community of Lyme Regis.

Response by Cllr Jon Andrews

The Lyme Regis town bus service (71) was arranged between the bus operator, Damory and Lyme Regis Town Council, making use of the fact that a bus was in the area following the school run. The town service was not managed or funded by Dorset Council.

Dorset Council had a contract with Damory to operate the school bus to Charmouth Primary school. The Council had to end this contract because the vehicle was no longer suitable for its needs and Damory could not offer a suitable alternative. The number of children needing transport to the primary school was 11. Dorset Council was paying for a 32-seater bus which was far too big for its needs. The larger bus was not always suitable for picking up children who live in remote parts of the area, meaning the Council had to fund additional taxis to pick up them up, despite there being spare seats on the bus.

From September 2024, the Council therefore started a new contract for the Charmouth Primary school bus using a 16-seater minibus. This is a more appropriate size for the number of pupils and to access remote narrow lanes.

We had discussions with the Deputy Town Clerk from the Town Council and Councillor Belinda Bawden on 5th June 2024, when we realised that we had to retender the route. We kept them updated throughout the process and informed him of the winning bidder as soon as we knew, so that they could start negotiations. Unfortunately, the winning operator was unable to take on the Town service.

TUPE transfers are arranged between the operators themselves because the Council does not employ the drivers directly. Under the terms of our procurement framework, the Council has a responsibility to facilitate a TUPE transfer if the incumbent operator believes that TUPE applies. In this case, when the route was retendered, Damory did not declare that TUPE would apply and the Council did not receive a request to facilitate a TUPE transfer.

We understand that the town council is considering options for the town service and we have given details of potential grant funding that may be available to support a new service if they wish to make an application.

NB the questions and statements received in relation to the Wareham Level Crossing were not dealt with due to the item being withdrawn from the agenda.

Cabinet – 19th November 2024

Questions from Councillors

1. Question from Cllr Craig Monks – Housing Needs

I am very proud that my ward is the home of Mountjoy school. Mountjoy school provides special education to children from across Dorset and neighbouring counties.

Many families who attend this school face significant challenges including housing needs when policies deem their housing choices unsuitable, leading to distressing placements in Weymouth bed and breakfasts, which result in difficulties such as disrupted education, long and costly school commutes, and additional financial strain.

Many families across the Council area face similar challenges but families who attend schools like Mountjoy face more extreme challenges including financial constraints due to higher care needs.

What measures could Dorset Council take to ensure that families with special needs, who are deemed homeless, can access suitable housing that meets their specific needs, even if this requires flexibility in housing policy?

Response by Cllr Gill Taylor

We fully understand and appreciate the challenges and the profound difficulties facing those many families across Dorset who need good quality, suitable and affordable housing. This includes the specific needs of households where family members have special educational needs or who are disabled – including those attending the Mountjoy School, as mentioned in the question from Cllr Monks. Our own figures show that there is a high number and very broad range of people in need of housing. This is reflective of national housing and economic pressures, but also reflective of a high level and complexity of support required within many of those families looking for a home. There is already excellent and detailed work carried out across Housing, Children's, Adults, and Health teams to consider how best to support those families, within the context of housing shortages and limited local or house type availability to match specific needs. That work always looks to focus on supportive options for families and the teams are always open to explore where a family are experiencing housing pressures and to seek realistic and sustainable solutions. We also work closely alongside our Registered Providers of Social Housing and Private Landlords to make sure that we are all aligned in the drive to find and provide suitable housing across the Dorset Council area, and to minimise the pressures outlined in the question relating to distance and reliance on temporary accommodation.

We have over 6,500 households on our Housing Register seeking social and affordable rented housing. During 2023/24 our affordable housing programme provided 508 new social homes, mainly through Registered Provider Housing Associations, and whilst this is considered very successful compared to other areas, we know that the demand and need is considerably higher. Transforming and ramping up the delivery of affordable homes across the Dorset Council area is at the centre of this Council's priorities and our we are formulating plans and actions to make change at pace, adding to what we do well, but doing much more to close those gaps. This includes making the most of available housing across the affordable and private rented sectors, and we work closely with families to help to explore options for their short, medium and long term housing needs. Sometimes, the shortage of available properties in local areas means that there is a wait for the most suitable or affordable home but our Housing Register team work with applicants to explore options and choices for families with specific support and housing needs.

In terms of how we let properties, this is governed by the Council's Allocation Policy, a statutory requirement covering the whole of the Dorset Council area and carefully planned to meet housing need fairly and effectively. Council Officers will determine priority and band households accordingly using a set and lawful criteria. Our highest priority band is A with the lowest being D and this is explained well within the Allocations Policy, available on our website. The Council is also subject to a range of legal duties to prevent homelessness but also to provide temporary accommodation and support into settled accommodation when a duty is determined. Temporary Accommodation includes Bed and Breakfast accommodation and leased accommodation, which is either managed and or owned by the Council. Recent investment to support operational objectives has shown significant success in high prevention outcomes (households prevented from homelessness) and therefore reducing reliance on expensive and unsuitable B&B and Temporary Accommodation. Over the past year, this has resulted in a reduction of 100 households in TA, of which over 50 families were in B&B accommodation.

At present, we have approximately 20 families in B&B. However, being a demand led service these figures do fluctuate. However, our overall objective is to eradicate the use of B&B hotels for families by the end of 2025.

Our success has ensured we are bucking the 'national' trend, which has seen significant increases in TA covering all cohorts. As it stands there are approximately 140,000 households living in TA nationally, with many of those households including children. This is around a 12% increase compared to this time last year. In Dorset we have reduced TA by 25% during that period.

Given the pressures on housing, we are developing an accelerated and ambitious plan to deliver our Housing Strategy. At the heart of that Strategy is a clear and ambitious vision to ensure our residents have access to affordable, suitable, secure homes where they can live well as part of sustainable and thriving communities. The delivery plan is underway and will be flexed to respond to emerging priorities and changes in pressure, legislation, or guidance in relation to accommodation with support. Please be assured, Cllr Monks, that these priorities very much include the need to support families who have children in schools such as Mountjoy, alongside the broad range of demand for housing, and work across this Council is coordinated to do this effectively, pragmatically and with the family's needs at the core.

2. Question from Cllr Craig Monks – Parnham House

Chairman, I wish to raise a concern regarding the timeframe of the process for the restoration of Parnham House.

To clarify, my question does not pertain to any specific planning application but instead focuses on the level of staffing, leadership and resources allocated to support the estate both within Dorset Council and other bodies such as Historic England as a consultative body.

Given the significant heritage value and the importance of ensuring progress, can you provide reassurances that sufficient resources and staff are in place to effectively manage and expedite this process?

Furthermore, what additional measures or resources can be considered to control and accelerate the restoration efforts as a whole?

And would the Portfolio holder meet with me and the owners of Parnham Park to agree a way forward in preserving the estate.

Response by Cllr Shane Bartlett

Parnham House is a grade I listed country house in extensive grounds, dating largely from the mid sixteenth century but in April 2017 it suffered a catastrophic fire which resulted in around 75% of the building being reduced to a shell. The Estate was subsequently sold in spring 2020 and the owner has restored parts of the building. The south wing remains in a very precarious state and is vulnerable to collapse due to it being unsupported and exposed to the elements. Officers have proactively sought to encourage the stabilisation of the building including recommending urgent construction of a wind and water tight scaffold to prevent further decay and ingress of water. Grant has been offered from Historic England towards this work, which has not been taken up to date.

It is, therefore, a challenging site where development which might not ordinarily be considered acceptable is being contemplated to facilitate restoration, and this is by

no means a simple or straightforward task. However, the Council has an experienced team with conservation, planning and other expertise to hand and good knowledge of the site. Throughout, officers have worked closely with Historic England and other agencies. The Council has also engaged an external consultant to review the viability and enabling development case of the development when applications for restoration of the building are submitted.

The Local Planning Authority has already approved various applications for planning permission and listed building consent at Parnham Park and has for some time advised the applicant to bring forward a masterplan for the entire estate and submit applications as soon as possible. We have also encouraged further pre-application advice from Dorset Council and other statutory consultees, including Historic England and the Environment Agency. This is important given the complexity of the proposed restoration and the likely very significant extent of enabling development within the Registered Park and Garden and Dorset National Landscape which is expected to be proposed to fund the restoration of the house.

The onus is on the owner to request further pre-application engagement, enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (should they wish to), submit an EIA Screening Request and make applications for the restoration of Parnham House.

I am happy to meet with Councillor Monks, the applicant and officers if you feel this would be helpful.

3. Question from Cllr Belinda Bawden - CTAP

Please could the Portfolio Holder for Place Services confirm when they are expecting to hear whether the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme (CTAP) for Charmouth and Swanage has been successful, so when our local stakeholders, organisations and residents could be fully involved in shaping the priority proposals?

Response by Cllr Jon Andrews

We anticipate hearing from the Environment Agency in the next 2-3 weeks as to whether the business case has been successful, and if so, a subsequent paper will be taken to the December cabinet meeting seeking its support and approval.

4. Question from Cllr Belinda Bawden – Dorset COP

The three Dorset-wide environmental networks - [Zero Carbon Dorset](#), [Sustainable Dorset](#) and the [Dorset Climate Action Network](#) – recently held the second [Dorset COP](#) when over 300 organisations and individuals were able to hear inspiring stories of community-based climate and environmental actions, ideas and aspirations.

Here's what was reported in [Dorset View](#):

Hundreds of people attended Dorset's second community-led 'conference of the parties' – Dorset COP – which was held on Saturday 2 November at Bournemouth University. The University's new vice-chancellor, Professor Alison Honour, opened the event alongside Lois Betts, the University's sustainability manager, recently elected local MP, Jessica Toale, and the Dorset COP organisers.

Jessica Toale said:

"There is no more profound a challenge or driver of global instability than climate change. While the annual climate COPs are really important international conferences, we cannot tackle climate change without local, community-level action.

"That is why this local Dorset COP was such a brilliant event – bringing together local people, businesses and policymakers to look at what the big issues are and how to address them – from renewable energy and carbon capture to the circular economy and sustainable transport.

"I will be working with change makers here in Bournemouth West to address some of these huge challenges – including cleaning up our seas and rivers, moving us towards a zero-waste economy and ensuring nature's recovery."

While it was encouraging to see officers from the Sustainability and Electoral Services teams attending the COP, and the Low Carbon Dorset displays, "policymakers" from Dorset Council were in really short supply, even fewer than last year.

I'm happy to report that the perception of Dorset Council's action on climate change was marginally better than last year, according to those attending the Carbon Literacy workshop for town and parish councillors and community groups but this was from 0 last year to about 20% of the audience.

Given the clear, concerning and continuing disconnection between what Dorset Council is actually achieving and what some of the most engaged people in the county **think** we are doing, would it be possible for Dorset Council to undertake now to support next year's Dorset COP in Sturminster Newton with collaboration, communication and, crucially, participation?

[Dorset COP](#)

[Dorset Biz report](#)

[Dorset View report](#)

Response by Cllr Nick Ireland

- Our communities are integral to our journey to net zero – and it is notable that public concern about climate change is significantly higher in the South West than the national average. But the proactivity of our community networks and Dorset COP are a testament to how this is catalysing grassroots action.
- Officers tell me that this year’s COP was another bustling and constructive day of discussion and debate – and I’m proud that they participated again this year, to once more showcase the significant work that the council is doing. They have told me how invaluable it is as a forum for us to engage and learn on how to push further and faster.
- We’re continuing to do more to keep our residents informed of what the council is achieving. On top of our existing channels and activities, we’ve:
 - launched a new climate and nature newsletter,
 - recruited an officer to do more external engagement,
 - and started to reach out more to local councils and schools.
 - Throughout the summer and now into autumn, we’ve also been touring the ‘Our journey to net zero’ photo exhibition around the county. This inspiring collection of photos and stories highlights how our Low Carbon Dorset programme has been helping local businesses and communities prepare for a greener, more sustainable future. If anyone here hasn’t already seen it, it’s currently on display in the reception area of county hall so please do take a moment to look on your way out.
- The seriousness of our commitment to act on climate change is clear – both by my taking on this portfolio myself, and through its centrality to the Council Plan we will discuss today.
- I am therefore of course disappointed that I couldn’t attend this year’s event myself due to prior diary commitments, but I very much look forward to attending at Sturminster Newton next year once that date is determined.