

DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 2021

Present: Cllrs Tony Alford, Jon Andrews, Mike Barron, Richard Biggs, Cherry Brooks, Dave Bolwell, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Graham Carr-Jones, Simon Christopher, Kelvin Clayton, Robin Cook, Janet Dover, Jean Dunseith, Matthew Hall, Paul Harrison, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Stella Jones, Andrew Kerby, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Howard Legg, Robin Legg, Jon Orrell, Emma Parker, Andrew Parry, Mary Penfold, Byron Quayle, Molly Rennie, Maria Roe, Jane Somper, Clare Sutton, David Taylor, David Tooke, Daryl Turner, Kate Wheller, John Worth, Jill Haynes, Mike Dyer, Mike Parkes (Vice-Chairman), Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Tony Ferrari, Beryl Ezzard, Andrew Starr, Derek Beer, David Walsh, Cathy Lugg, Toni Coombs, Gill Taylor, Barry Goringe, Pete Barrow, Brian Heatley, Ryan Holloway, Pauline Batstone, Nick Ireland, Paul Kimber, Laura Miller, David Morgan, Louie O'Leary, Ray Bryan, Shane Bartlett, Val Potheary (Chairman), Belinda Ridout, Mark Roberts, Spencer Flower, David Shortell, Susan Cocking, Gary Suttle, Simon Gibson, Les Fry, Peter Wharf and Rod Adkins

Apologies: Cllrs Rebecca Knox, Bill Pipe, Sarah Williams, David Gray, Tim Cook, Andy Canning, Julie Robinson, Roland Tarr and Bill Trite

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

Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Piles (Corporate Director - Economic Growth and Infrastructure), Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Grace Evans (Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer), Rebecca Forrester (Business Intelligence & Performance), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children) and Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

33. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ryan Holloway declared an interest in item 8 The Dorset Council Plan, as he had a business located on the Dorset Innovation Park. Cllr Holloway did not speak or vote on the item.

34. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman advised that this was an informal meeting and the minutes of the July meeting would be on the agenda of the next Full Council meeting in December.

She reported the sad death of former County Councillor, John Peake MBE and invited Cllr Jill Haines to pay tribute to him.

35. Public Participation - Questions and Statements

Public questions, statements and the responses from the Leader of the Council and appropriate Portfolio Holder were set out in Appendix 1 attached to these minutes.

36. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions or deputations.

37. Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members

The Leader of the Council presented his Bulletin and highlighted the following two points:

Firstly, the budget pressures faced by the Council largely due to the number of older people living in the county which created a higher level of demand for adult social care services than many other areas in the country. He had continued to lobby ministers via the Dorset MPs on a range of issues, in particular the funding crises faced by Local Government in our health and social care system.

Secondly, Dorset's ambitions for children and young people and the £37.5m investment the Council had made in children's facilities.

Ofsted had just completed a three week inspection and he thanked those in children's services for all their hard work and input.

He also commented on the closure of the Blandford Group Medical Practice.

38. Questions from Councillors

Questions put by councillors to the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders are attached to these minutes at Appendix 2, together with the responses.

39. Dorset Council Plan

Cllr Ryan Holloway had declared an interest in this item, he did not take part in the discussion or vote.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change and Deputy Leader presented the report which had been through Cabinet in June and reviewed by the two overview Committees in detail.

He thanked the Overview Committees for their input which included one of the key recommendations that climate and ecological change became a priority. A

number of additional changes had also been made following recommendations from the Overview Committees.

Members debated the report and made comments on the following points:-

Representation for suitable affordable housing to enable young people to stay in the county.

Suggestions for an Executive Director appointment to support the climate and ecological strategy.

Dorset's ageing population, the high adult social care budget together with the high housing costs for younger people presented unsustainable demographics.

The need to create a better and healthier lifestyle for our older people – prevention at scale.

Economic growth - focus on better skilled jobs and apprenticeships

Proposed by Cllr Peter Wharf

Seconded by Cllr Spencer Flower

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Executive Director for Corporate Development and Chief Finance Officer confirmed that he had listened to the debate and having taken into account that members were minded to support the recommendations in the report, confirmed his decision.

Decision:

- (a) That the updated Dorset Council plan, as set out in appendix I of the report to Cabinet 5 October 2021, be adopted.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive for the final design of the plan.

40. Return to In Person Full Council Meetings

The report was presented by the Leader of the Council who proposed the following recommendation:

Recommendation

That Full Council and all committees will return to ‘in person’ meetings from when the appropriate webcasting equipment has been installed and tested to the satisfaction of Group Leaders (anticipated to be by Mid November 2021). In the meantime Informal arrangements will continue as previously agreed by Full Council at the 4 May Annual Council and extended by the Chief Executive’.

Debate focussed on planned working arrangements, hybrid meetings and hybrid working. It was hoped to be webcasting hybrid meetings from mid-November, but patience was required to allow for training, setting up and testing

Some members felt that the committee rooms were not fit for purpose, were antiquated and did not fit with the image of a modern digital council.

References were made to safety, travel costs, carbon emissions, inclusivity and the need for a hybrid model.

Clarification was sought on explanations for the public on how the council planned to keep them safe and what mitigation measures would be in place.

In response to member concerns regarding suitable ventilation systems the Leader would ask the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Assets and Property to send members a briefing note re: aspects of covid safety.

Proposed by Cllr Spencer Flower
Seconded by Cllr Les Fry

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Executive Director for Corporate Development and Chief Finance Officer confirmed that he had listened to the debate and having taken into account that members were minded to support the recommendations in the report, confirmed his decision.

Decision:

That Full Council and all committees would return to ‘in person’ meetings from when the appropriate webcasting equipment had been installed and tested to the satisfaction of Group Leaders (anticipated to be by Mid November 2021). In the meantime Informal arrangements would continue as previously agreed by Full Council at the 4 May Annual Council and extended by the Chief Executive’.

Reason for Decision:

To enable members to consider how best to ensure that democratic decision making is able to continue effectively and safely

41. Dispensation for non attendance at committee meetings

The report was presented and proposed by Cllr Spencer Flower.
Seconded by Cllr Clare Sutton.

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Executive Director for Corporate Development and Chief Finance Officer confirmed that he had listened to the debate and having taken into account that members were minded to support the recommendations in the report, confirmed his decision.

Decision:

That all members of council receive a dispensation in relation to Section 85 of the Local Government Act for the period up to and including 14 April 2022 for the reason that not all members may be able to attend an in person committee, Cabinet or Full Council meeting due to Coronavirus.

Reason for Decision:

To prevent members from being disqualified as a councillor whose health or personal circumstances may prevent them from attending in person committee meetings due to the health risks associated with Coronavirus.

42. **Appointment of temporary members to Parish Councils**

The report was presented by the Leader of the Council.

Due to a Parish Council finding itself inquorate, he explained that Dorset Council had a duty to deal with the matters of the day in the Parishes.

In response to a suggestion, that authority should be given to the Group Leaders after consultation with the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director for Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer explained that there was a legal and technical reason why it had to be done as recommended in the report.

The Corporate Director for Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer explained that these were temporary Parish Councillors who would be put in place by Dorset Council to enable Parish Councils to co-opt councillors for themselves.

Proposed by Cllr Spencer Flower
Seconded by Cllr Les Fry

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Corporate Director for Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer confirmed he had listened to the debate and having taken into account that members were minded to support the recommendations in the report confirmed his decision.

Decision:

That delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive, after consultation with Group Leaders and the local member, to enable the appointment of temporary parish councillors where a parish council would otherwise be inquorate.

Reason for Decision:

To avoid a situation where a parish council that has become inquorate is unable to function and can carry out necessary business.

43. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

44. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.37 pm

Chairman

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