

DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 DECEMBER 2021

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

Apologies: Cllrs Alex Brenton and Nocturin Lacey-Clarke

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Vivienne Broadhurst (Interim Executive Director - People Adults), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), Theresa Leavy (Executive Director of People - Children), Jonathan Mair (Corporate Director - Legal & Democratic Service Monitoring Officer), John Sellgren (Executive Director, Place) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

45. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Brenton and Cllr N Lacey-Clarke.

46. Declarations of Interest

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

47. Presentation

The Chairman welcomed Rachel Brannagan, Emily Kadoch of Wessex Reserve Forces & Cadets Association (RFCA). She also welcomed Kevin Moore, Programme Co-ordinator Dorset Armed Forces Covenant Programme.

Rachel Brannagan advised that the RFCA was responsible for delivering the Armed Forces Covenant programme to employers in the south west region. Dorset Council had successfully achieved silver in the Employer Recognition Award for 2021.

In response, Cllr D Walsh, the member Champion for the Dorset Armed Forces Covenant advised that he was very proud to be part of the programme and that Dorset had achieved silver in the Employer Recognition Award for 2021. The Award, which would be displayed in the council building, was presented to the Chairman of the Council by the Chief Executive.

48. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced the sad death of Terrance Farmer, ex-Councillor for West Dorset District Council. She invited Cllr M Penfold to pay tribute to him.

The Chairman also announced the sad death of Darran Gunter ex Chief Fire Officer for Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service. She invited Cllr R Knox to pay tribute to him.

The Chairman also announced that she had planted an Oak tree outside of county hall to launch the Queen's Platinum Jubilee initiative. The Chairman also advised about the Volunteer Hero Awards which were being promoted by the council and other partners. She invited members to make their nominations.

49. Public Participation - Questions and Statements

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

50. Public participation - petitions and deputations

There were no petitions or deputations.

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

The Leader of the Council advised members that his bulletin would be published following the meeting and a few areas that would be included in the were as follows: -

- Children's Services was judged as "good" by Ofsted following an inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) in September. The final report published by Ofsted confirmed that the overall effectiveness of Dorset Council Children's Services are of a "good quality and are continuing to improve" and that the council has

delivered “an impressive pace and effectiveness of change, in the context of a pandemic and Local Government Reorganisation in 2019.

- Inspectors also noted that the council has a “proven determination to give every child in Dorset a brighter future.” Dorset Council was judged to have “outstanding leadership” for Children’s Services, noting that “senior leaders have taken the challenges presented by the pandemic as an opportunity to engage partners more firmly in the wider safeguarding agenda and in the vision of making Dorset the best place it can be for children to thrive.” He congratulated those involved.
- He also referred to the financial challenges facing the local government sector which were huge for the next financial year and in the medium term. He also mentioned to the two really useful Budget Cafes for members that were held during November.
- Reports had been considered by the People and Health Scrutiny Committee, with the Place and Resources Scrutiny Committee considering this on 7 January. Then budget proposals would be put to the Cabinet in January for a recommendation to Full Council in February.
- The leader of the Council also advised members of the lobbying of central government for a fair deal for council that had taken place over the year. Senior members continued to meet with local MPs on a regular basis.

Cllr A Parry, Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help took the opportunity to thank officers for their hard work in achieving a judgement of “Good” in the recent Ofsted inspection.

In response to a question regarding underfunding of council services, the Leader of the Council advised that lobbying was taking place across the sector and there was no question that local government did require further funding.

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health to read a short briefing from Sam Crowe, Director of Public Health. This document contained important information about the current Covid situation in Dorset, the work being carried out to rapidly expand the vaccination programme and the pressures faced by the health & care system. He asked members to share this information with their local communities.

52. Questions from Councillors

There were three questions received from councillors. A copy of the questions and the responses were attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes.

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr N Ireland, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health confirmed that he would reply to Cllr Ireland in writing after the meeting.

53. **Community Governance Review - Revised Timetable**

The Leader of the Council set out a report seeking agreement to amend the Community Governance Review timetable. This proposal would enable sufficient time to be able to consider the detailed responses that had been received to the public consultation process.

The Leader of the Council proposed the motion and Cllr N Ireland seconded the motion. Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Chief Executive advised that in the light of the “minded to” vote to support the recommendations he set out his decision as follows:

Decision

- (a) That the Community Governance Review timetable be amended as follows:
 - (i) Draft recommendations to Full Council – 15 February 2022
 - (ii) Public consultation on draft recommendations – 28 February 2022 to 23 May 2022 (12 weeks)
 - (iii) Final recommendations to Full Council - 14 July 2022

Reason for the decision

To enable sufficient time to be able to consider the detailed responses that have been received to the public consultation seeking initial submissions for changes to community governance arrangements for town and parish councils, and for appropriate analysis to be carried out against the statutory criteria, ensuring that community governance arrangements within the Dorset Council area are reflective of the identities and interests of the community in that area, and achieve electoral equality.

54. **Changing the arrangements for bringing motions on notice to Full Council**

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee presented a “minded to” recommendation from the committee regarding changing the arrangements for bringing motions on notice to Full Council.

He advised that the committee was charged to find the balance between the inclusion of political thought and stopping council from becoming overloaded with several motions.

In proposing the recommendation, the Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee advised that it was the committee’s view that the recommendation struck a balanced compromise.

Cllr L Fry seconded the motion.

As the Leader of the largest opposition group, Cllr N Ireland supported this proposal.

Cllr P Kimber expressed concern that for smaller groups the number of 17 members would be difficult to achieve and he proposed the following amendment

“that the number of councillors required to support the submission of a motion on notice be 10.” This was seconded by Cllr B Heatley.

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

Members then voted on the original motion as set out in the recommendation. Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried.

The Chief Executive advised council that he had read the papers, listened to the debate and “minded to” decision. Following this his decision was set out as follows.

Decision

That Rule 14.2 (i) be removed altogether (meaning that the Proper Officer would no longer decide on whether or not to accept a notice of motion) and that the number of councillors required to support the submission of a motion on notice be 17.

Reason for the decision

The option in paragraph 11.3 (of the attached report) would mean that an officer would no longer decide whether to accept a motion on notice. Setting the threshold of councillor support for a motion on notice at 17 councillors would reflect the significance to be attached to debating an issue at Full Council.

55. Appointment of Overview Committee Chairmen

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower that Cllr C Jones be appointed as Chairman of Place and Resources Overview Committee for the period up to the Annual Meeting of Council in 2022.

It was proposed by Cllr R Hughes that Cllr L Fry be appointed as Chairman of Place and Resources Overview Committee for the period up to the Annual Meeting of Council in 2022.

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” decision was to appoint Cllr C Jones as Chairman of Place and Resources Overview Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower that Cllr M Parkes be appointed as Chairman of the People & Health Overview Committee for the period up to the Annual Meeting of Council in 2022.

There were no other nominations.

The Chief Executive advised that he had listened to members views and noted the “minded to” decision; and under his delegated powers he confirmed the following decision.

Decision

- (a) That Cllr C Jones be appointed Chairman for the Place and Resources Overview Committee for the period up to the Annual Meeting of Council in 2022.
- (b) That Cllr M Parkes be appointed Chairman of the People & Health Overview Committee for the period up to the Annual Meeting of Council in 2022.

56. **Review of Political Balance**

Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council reported that Cllr M Barron had recently joined the conservative group and as a result this had impacted on the council’s political balance, resulting in some minor changes.

It was proposed by Cllr S Flower that the allocation of committee seats be approved, and this was seconded by Cllr J Haynes

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

Following the vote, the Chief Executive advised that having listened to the “minded to” decision he had decided to agree the recommendations as set out in the report, including a minor typo amendment to the report’s appendix.

Decision

- (a) That following a review of the Political Balance, the allocation of committee seats, as set out in the Appendix to this report be approved.
- (b) That the following nominations to vacancies on committees be approved in accordance with the wishes of the respective Political Group:

Cllr M Barron – Appeals Committee
Cllr M Barron – Licensing Committee
Cllr M Roe – Place & Resources Overview Committee

Reason for the decision

To approve the allocation of committee seats following a formal review of the political balance of the Council, as a consequence of Cllr M Barron moving from the Liberal Democrat Group to the Conservative Group.

57. **Adoption of the Calendar of Meetings 2022 - 2023**

In presenting the calendar of meetings for 2022/2023, Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council proposed its formal adoption. This was seconded by Cllr C Sutton

A member expressed concern that there were few evening meetings set out in the calendar which precluded some members of the community in standing as a councillor. In response the Leader of the Council advised that the calendar of meetings before members reflected the current mandate that existed following a member survey, however to make sure that this was still the current trend, a further councillor survey would be carried out to garner members views on this matter going forward.

Upon being put to the vote the “minded to” motion was carried. The Chief Executive advised that he had listened to members “minded to” decision and confirmed his decision as follows:

Decision

- (a) That the calendar of meetings for the period May 2022 to May 2023 be approved.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director – Legal and Democratic Services to make any necessary changes, in consultation with the relevant Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, to ensure effective political management.

Reason for the decision

To ensure effective political management, comply with the Dorset Council Procedure Rules and to put into place appropriate arrangements for council committee meetings.

58. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items to report.

59. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business for this meeting.

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 8.17 pm

Chairman

