

CABINET

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 OCTOBER 2023

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

Apologies: Cllrs Gary Suttle and Simon Gibson

Also present: Cllr Simon Christopher, Cllr Les Fry, Cllr Barry Goringe, Cllr Rob Hughes and Cllr Sherry Jespersen

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

Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Sean Cremer (Corporate Director for Finance and Commercial), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Vivienne Broadhurst (Executive Director - People Adults), Katie Hale (Head of Revenues and Benefits), Dugald Lockhart (Service Manager Digital Place) and Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement)

51. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

52. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report.

53. Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements to report.

54. Questions from Councillors

There were no councillor questions to report.

55. Forward Plan

The draft Cabinet Forward Plan for October 2023 was received and noted.

56. Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy for approval.

It was proposed by Cllr L Beddow seconded by Cllr R Bryan

Decision

That the current policy be reapproved, and the next review be set for September 2026.

Reason for the decision

The Policy was last considered by Cabinet in June 2019 and although no changes have been made or new duties placed upon the scheme with the policy remaining correct. The Policy has been brought back to cabinet to provide an update and ensure that the policy remains reviewed on a regular basis in order to deliver this important financial support.

57. Digital Infrastructure & Inclusion Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Transformation presented a report setting out the Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Strategy. The Strategy outlined how the council would continue to reduce digital exclusion and inspire tech enterprise, providing better outcomes for individuals, the economy and society. The Portfolio Holder referred to the work carried out by the Place and Resources Overview Committee in developing the strategy and the workshops held with stakeholders. The strategy also underpinned delivery of each of the Dorset Council's five key priorities.

In presenting the recommendation the Portfolio Holder proposed the following amendment.

That, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Corporate Development and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy, authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Corporate Development to identify an appropriate source of funding up to £374,000 per annum from the options identified on paragraph 3.11 (Cabinet 3 October 2023) for the implementation of the Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Strategy.

The amended recommendation was seconded by Cllr Parry.

Decision

- (a) That the final version of the Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Strategy and delivery plan appended to the report of Cabinet 3 October 2023, be adopted.
- (b) That, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Corporate Development and Transformation and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Capital Strategy, authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Corporate Development to identify an appropriate source of funding up to £374,000 per annum from the options identified on paragraph

3.11 (Cabinet 3 October 2023) for the implementation of the Digital Infrastructure and Inclusion Strategy.

Reason for the decision

To support delivery of the Council Plan priority of driving economic prosperity and the cabinet commitment of digital innovation.

58. **Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - proposed response to the government consultation**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented a report setting out the council's proposed response to the government's consultation on changes to how local plans were prepared. The draft response was set out at Appendix 1 to the report of 3 October 2023.

The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill proposed a number of changes to the planning system and was currently passing through parliament. There was some uncertainty over when the Bill would receive Royal Assent, but the expectation was the changes to the planning system would be put into place by late 2024. The current consultation focused on changes to the approach for preparing local plans with the aim of implementing a more streamlined and focused approach.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder advised that the local plan review was not delayed but had taken a different approach for its review and was on track for it to be adopted by Spring 2026.

In response to further questions members were advised that the Housing Strategy and its consultation would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in December.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walsh and seconded by Cllr B Quayle

Decision

That the full response to the consultation questions, as set out in the Appendix to the Cabinet report of 3 October 2023, be sent to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

The response welcomes the proposed amendments that simplify the plan making process but expresses concern over the tight timetable for the preparation of a new style local plan.

Reason for the decision

To enable the Council to influence the changes to the local plan making process being proposed by Government.

59. **Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan Review 2011 - 2033**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning presented a report on the neighbourhood plan review of the Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan. The plan had been subject to independent examination and the examiner had recommended that the Council should make the plan with the modifications set out in his report.

In presenting the report the Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to congratulate all those involved in producing a successful neighbourhood plan review.

It was proposed by Cllr D Walsh seconded by Cllr L Beddow

Decision

- (a) That the Council makes the modified Blandford + Neighbourhood Plan 2011 – 2023 (as set out in Appendix A of the Cabinet report to 3 October 2023) part of the statutory development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area.
- (b) That the Council offers its congratulations to Blandford Forum Town Council, Blandford St Mary Parish Council, Bryanston Parish Council, and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in producing a successful neighbourhood plan review.

Reason for the decision

To formally make the modified neighbourhood plan part of the statutory development plan for the Blandford + Neighbourhood Area. In addition, to recognise the significant amount of work undertaken by the Town and Parish Councils and members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group in preparing the plan review and to congratulate the Councils and the Group on their success.

60. Ofsted Regulation of Supported Accommodation for 16-17 Year Olds - Recommendation from People & Health Overview Committee

The Portfolio Holder for Children, Education, Skills and Early Help presented the report and the People and Health Overview Committee's recommendation regarding Ofsted Regulation of Supported Accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds.

It was proposed by Cllr B Quayle seconded by Cllr J Somper

Decision

That the approach to Ofsted regulation of supported accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds be adopted.

Reason for the decision

To ensure compliance with the latest legislation and any subsequent regulation/statutory guidance.

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

There were no referrals to report other than those already on the Forward Plan.

62. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items considered at the meeting.

63. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business scheduled for this meeting.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 10.31 am

Chairman

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