

**DORSET COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 MAY 2024**

**Present:** Cllrs Val Potheary, Bill Trite, Jon Andrews, Jindy Atwal, Mike Baker, Shane Bartlett, Belinda Bawden, Laura Beddow, Derek Beer, Matt Bell, Richard Biggs, Bridget Bolwell, Dave Bolwell, Louise Bown, Alex Brenton, Piers Brown, Ray Bryan, Andy Canning, Will Chakawhata, Simon Christopher, Simon Clifford, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Les Fry (Vice-Chair), Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Barry Goringe, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Stella Jones (Chair), Paul Kimber, Chris Kippax, Nocturin Lacey-Clarke, Robin Legg, Cathy Lugg, Rory Major, Craig Monks, David Morgan, Steve Murcer, David Northam, Louie O'Leary, Emma Parker, Mike Parkes, Andrew Parry, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Julie Robinson, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Jane Somper, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, David Tooke, James Vitali, Claudia Webb, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

**Apologies:** Cllrs Jill Haynes, Jon Orrell and Kate Wheller

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

Jacqui Andrews (Service Manager for Democratic and Electoral Services), Paul Beecroft (Communications Business Partner), Hayley Caves (Member Development and Support Officer), Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Chris Harrod (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Jennifer Lewis (Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement), Jonathan Mair (Director of Legal and Democratic and Monitoring Officer), Matt Prosser (Chief Executive), Elaine Tibble (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Matthew Turnbull (Democratic and Electoral Services Apprentice) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

**1. Election of Chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr S Jones be elected Chairman of the Council for the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

There were no other valid nominations received.

**Decision**

That Cllr S Jones be elected as Chairman of the Council for 2024/25 Municipal Year.

2. **Election of Vice-chairman**

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and seconded by Cllr N Ireland that Cllr L Fry be elected Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.

It was proposed by Cllr L O'Leary and seconded by Cllr A Parry that Cllr K Wheller be elected Vice-Chairman for 2024/25.

**Decision**

That Cllr Les Fry be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for 2024/25 Municipal Year.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J Haynes, J Orrell and K Wheller.

4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2024 were confirmed and signed.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

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

6. **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no announcements.

7. **Election of Leader of Council**

It was proposed by Cllr A Canning and seconded by Cllr R Legg that Cllr N Ireland be elected Leader of the Council for 2024/25.

**Decision**

That Cllr N Ireland be elected as Leader of the Council

8. **Appointment of Deputy Leader of Council, Portfolio Holders and Lead Members**

The Leader of the Council announced the following appointments:

Deputy Leader – Cllr R Biggs

**Portfolio Holder(s):**

Property & Assets, Economic Growth & Levelling Up – Cllr R Biggs

Finance & Capital Strategy – Cllr S Clifford

Corporate Development, Transformation, Digital & Change – Cllr R Holloway

Place Commissioned Services (Highways, Waste, Travel, Leisure etc.) – Cllr J Andrews

Children's Services, Education & Skills – Cllr C Sutton  
Adult Social Care – Cllr S Robinson  
Public Health, Environmental Health, Housing, Community Safety and Regulatory Services – Cllr G Taylor  
Planning and Emergency Planning – Cllr S Bartlett  
Customer, Culture and Community Engagement – Cllr R Hope

9. **Announcements and Reports from the Leader of Council and Cabinet Members**

The Leader of the Council welcomed all members to the chamber and congratulated them on their election or re-election. He also thanked Members who had served on Dorset Council for the past five years, including those who had stood down or not re-elected. He advised that he would be launching a review into a number of key issues that had been raised by residents prior to the local elections taking place, details included:

- Car parking charges
- Bus services
- Cost of living crisis

Further to the points raised above, he advised that there were longer-term ambitions to increase the building of affordable housing to buy and rent, but this would need work to understand any associated implications. In addition to this, he referred to the previously declared climate emergency and highlighted his hopes that Councillors could continue working together collaboratively when making decisions to positively contribute to the residents of Dorset.

In response, Cllr P Kimber thanked the Leader for his introductory speech and welcomed his commitment to the environment, he queried how Dorset Council would prioritise the safeguarding of nature. Cllr Ireland advised that he would be bringing forward a motion the next meeting of Council that would declare a nature emergency.

10. **Public Participation - questions**

There were five questions received from members of the public and these are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

11. **Public participation - petitions and deputations**

No petitions or deputations were received from members of the public.

12. **Questions from Councillors**

There were two Cllr questions, as appended to these minutes at Appendix B.

13. **Appointments to Committees, Joint Committees and Boards and election of Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen**

The Director of Legal and Democratic presented a report setting out the proposed allocation of committee seats in line with political balance rules and, in accordance with the Council's constitution, to make appointments to committees, joint panels and boards. The report also included an appendix that set out the proposed Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of ordinary committees for the forthcoming year, which set out two committees whereby the position of Vice-Chair would be contested.

Contested Positions

**Vice-Chair – People & Health Overview Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr C Sutton and Seconded by Cllr B Bawden that Cllr J Orrell be nominated as Vice-Chair for People & Health Overview Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr W Chakawata be elected as Vice Chair for People & Health Overview Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, Cllr Chakawata was duly elected as Vice Chair of the People & Health Overview Committee.

**Vice-Chair – Licensing Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning that Cllr L Bown be nominated as Vice-Chair for Licensing Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr R Hughes and seconded by Cllr P Roper that Cllr L Fry be nominated as Vice-Chair for Licensing Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, Cllr Bown was duly elected as Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee.

**Decision**

1. That the allocation of committee seats in accordance with political balance rules, and the appointments to ordinary committees, joint panels, and boards, as nominated by the Political Group Leaders, be approved for 2024/25 as set out in Appendices 1, 2 & 3 respectively;
2. That delegated authority be given to the Director of Legal & Democratic, in consultation with the appropriate Political Group Leader, to make in-year changes to appointments;
3. That Chairs and Vice-Chairs of committees be elected for the 2024/25 municipal year as set out in Appendix 4 and per the results of the contested votes.

14. **Appointments to Outside Bodies, Joint Bodies and Panels**

The Director of Legal and Democratic presented a report setting out the proposed appointments to Outside Bodies, Joint Bodies and Panels.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by A Canning

### Decision

1. That the appointment of councillors to national and significant bodies in Appendix 1 be approved.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer, after consultation with Group Leaders, to make appointments and fill vacancies where appropriate.
3. That the appointment of councillors to local member positions in Appendix 3 be approved.

### 15. Dispensations for Councillors

The Leader of the Council presented a report setting out a proposal to grant a series of standing dispensations to enable members to take part in certain types of decision, where their participation might otherwise be questioned as a possible breach of the Council's Member Code of Conduct

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr A Canning

### Decision

That the following dispensations be granted until the ordinary date of elections in May 2029:

1. **To all members:** to take part in agreeing the budget and the setting of council tax but not where the interest is as the owner of an additional property and the decision to be made relates to any council tax premium on dwellings occupied periodically (second homes).
2. **To all members:** to approve the Member Scheme of Allowances.
3. **To all members appointed to represent the Council on outside bodies:** to remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
4. **To executive members appointed to the Shareholder Committees of Care Dorset and the Dorset Centre of Excellence:** to remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
5. **To any members appointed to the Board of Homes Dorset:** To remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.
6. **To any members or reserve members appointed to the South West Audit Partnership Ltd Owners Board:** To remain and to participate in any debate and decision in any council meeting and to deal with any matter as a Cabinet Member exercising executive functions, including individual executive delegated decision making.

16. **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The Deputy Leader of the Council presented a report setting out the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee, which met on 15 April 2024 to consider the publication of Guidance to Councillors about the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr R Biggs and seconded by Cllr N Lacey-Clark

**Decision**

That Full Council endorses the publication of Guidance to Councillors about the Council's Sexual Harassment Policy.

17. **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

18. **Exempt Business**

There was no exempt business

**Appendix A - Public Participation - Questions**  
**Appendix B - Questions from Councillors**

**Duration of meeting:** 6.30 - 7.39 pm

**Chairman**

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