

DORSET COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 18 JULY 2024

Present: Cllrs Stella Jones (Chair), Les Fry (Vice-Chair), 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, Barrie Cooper, Richard Crabb, Peter Dickenson, Neil Eysenck, Beryl Ezzard, Scott Florek, Spencer Flower, Alex Fuhrmann, Simon Gibson, Barry Goringe, Jill Haynes, Hannah Hobbs-Chell, Sally Holland, Ryan Holloway, Ryan Hope, Rob Hughes, Nick Ireland, Jack Jeanes, Sherry Jespersen, Carole Jones, Paul Kimber, 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, Val Pothecary, Byron Quayle, Belinda Ridout, Julie Robinson, Steve Robinson, Pete Roper, David Shortell, Andy Skeats, Duncan Sowry-House, Andrew Starr, Gary Suttle, Clare Sutton, Roland Tarr, David Taylor, Gill Taylor, Andy Todd, David Tooke, Bill Trite, James Vitali, Claudia Webb, Kate Wheller, Sarah Williams, Ben Wilson and Carl Woode

Present remotely: Cllrs Toni Coombs

Apologies: Cllrs Chris Kippax, Jon Orrell and Jane Somper

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

Kate Critchel (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Susan Dallison (Democratic Services Team Leader), George Dare (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), 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) and Lindsey Watson (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

19. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024 were confirmed and signed.

20. Declarations of Interest

Cllr S Bartlett declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in minute 23 because of his wife's employment status in relation the Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre.

21. Chair's Announcements

The Chair reported the deaths of Honorary Alderman John Tory (former North Dorset District Councillor) and Jess Nagel (former Weymouth & Portland Borough Councillor). The Chair also advised that a short presentation from the Dorset Youth Council, would take place at the beginning of every council meeting going forward.

22. **Public Participation - questions**

There were seven questions received from members of the public and these are set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes. There were also 2 public statements and these can also be found in the appendix.

23. **Public Participation - petitions and deputations**

Petition – Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre

Mr Steve Parlour presented a petition requesting Dorset Council to “stop the closure of the Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre, Wimborne”. A copy of his full statement is attached at Appendix 2 to these minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr J Andrews and seconded by Cllr N Ireland that this matter be considered by Cabinet at its next meeting in September.

Some members expressed concerns around why this matter was not going to be considered by a scrutiny committee prior to a decision of Cabinet in September. The Director for Legal and Democratic Services advised that it was expedient to take the matter directly to Cabinet in September to avoid delay and for an early decision; he also confirmed that there was no requirement in the constitution, for a petition to be referred to a scrutiny committee prior to a decision made by any other committee.

Decision

That the petition be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Deputation – Bibby Stockholm Barge

A deputation was submitted by Elaine White, Candy Udwin, Lucy Hardwicke, Sally Davidson and Giovanna Lewis on behalf of “Stand Up to Racism Dorset” in respect of the Bibby Stockholm Barge.

In response to the deputation, the Leader of the Council advised that Dorset Council remained opposed to the use of the Bibby Stockholm barge and to any extension of the contract between the Home Office and Portland Port. He confirmed that every opportunity would be used to engage with the new Government and new local MP to pursue the Council’s opposition. (A copy of the full response is attached at Appendix 3 to these minutes).

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

The Leader of the Council reported that Dorset Council was shortlisted in the digital transformation category of the MJ Awards 2024 for a planning convergence and transformation project. Dorset Council was “highly commended” in this category.

The Council was also shortlisted for a Royal Town Planning Institute (Southwest) – 2024 Award. The Leader of the Council advised that the Judges were impressed with the “root and branch” scope of the service delivery and the high aspirational self-imposed targets to the creation of their new Unitary Authority Status.

Following the recent King’s Speech for the Opening of Parliament, the Leader of the Council confirmed that there was still much to be clarified in terms of devolution, planning changes and adult social care.

In response to a question, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the function of scrutiny was important to his administration. He also advised that the discussions with neighbouring councils regarding devolution options would be taking place shortly.

25. Questions from Councillors

There were seven Councillor questions, as appended to these minutes at Appendix 4.

26. Adoption of Purbeck Local Plan 2018-2034

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Emergency Planning presented a report seeking the adoption on the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034) as part of the development plan for the Purbeck Area.

In presenting the recommendation, the Cabinet Member advised that the Purbeck Local Plan was submitted by Purbeck District Council prior to the creation of Dorset Council in April 2019. The Planning Inspectorate found the plan to be legally compliant and sound. He further advised that the plan, if adopted, would provide the framework for making decisions on planning matters in the Purbeck area until the emerging Dorset Local Plan. Failure to adopt the plan would leave the Purbeck area open to developer-led planning applications which were not consistent with PLP1 development strategy through the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Most members present acknowledged that, the current plan was significantly out-of-date and therefore the most appropriate action should be to adopt the plan.

It was proposed by Cllr S Barrett and seconded by Cllr J Andrews

Decision

That the Purbeck Local Plan (2018-2034) be adopted as part of the development plan for the Purbeck area.

27. **Youth Justice Plan**

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, Education and Skills presented the report and proposed the recommendation that the Youth Justice Plan be adopted.

The recommendation was seconded by Cllr R Legg

Decision

That the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 be approved.

28. **Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checking**

The Leader of the Council presented the report and proposed the recommendation from the Audit and Governance Committee of 8 July 2024.

The recommendation was seconded by Cllr R Biggs.

Decision

That the Disclosure and Barring Service Checks for Councillors Policy be adopted.

29. **Planning and Licensing Committees**

In proposing the recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee on 8 July 2024, the Chair, Cllr G Suttle reported that recommendation 3 should read “2024” not 2025.

The recommendations were seconded by Cllr S Flower.

Decision

- (a) That the Officer Scheme of Delegation, be amended, in the Constitution to change the process for determining which planning applications are referred to the planning committees (as shown in Appendix 1 of the report).
- (b) That the Protocol for Members and Officers on Planning Procedures in the Constitution, be amended, at paragraph 8.2 (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report).
- (c) That any Officer Scheme of Delegation Change take effect on 25 July 2024.
- (d) That the Constitution be amended to rename Licensing Committee as the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee, creating a separate General Licensing Committee and substituting Articles 8.28 and 8.29 of the Constitution with new Articles 8.28 – 8.31 (as set out in Appendix 2 of the report).

- (e) That the Chair, Vice-Chair and other Members of the Licensing and Gambling Acts Committee also be appointed to the General Licencing Committee.
- (f) That sub-committees of the two licensing committees will be formed as and when needed from the membership of the relevant licensing committee.

30. **Timing of Meetings**

The Leader of the Council presented a report requesting Council to approve a minor change to the time Cabinet meetings were held throughout the year and to allow Chairs of People & Health Overview Committee, People & Health Scrutiny Committee, Place & Resources Overview Committee, Place & Resources Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee the ability to change the meeting times of their committees.

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr R Hope

Decision

- (a) That, as a change to the current Calendar of Meetings all future Cabinet meetings be held at 6.30pm.
- (b) That each of the Chairs of the 2 Overview Committees, the 2 Scrutiny Committees and the Audit and Governance Committee, in consultation with committee members, be given discretion to change the time of day at which their committee is to meet.

31. **Notice of Motion - The Nature Emergency**

Full Council received the following motion proposed by Cllr N Ireland, seconded by Cllr C Sutton and supported by Cllr David Taylor, Cllr Mike Baker, Cllr Belinda Bawden, Cllr Dave Bolwell, Cllr Sarah Williams, Cllr Simon Clifford, Cllr Steve Robinson, Cllr Richard Biggs, Cllr Gill Taylor, Cllr Claudia Webb, Cllr Scott Florek, Cllr Duncan Sowry-House, Cllr Kate Wheller, Cllr Louise Bown, Cllr Will Chakawhata, Cllr Andy Canning, Cllr Jack Jeans, Cllr Chris Kippax, Cllr Jon Orrell, Cllr M Bell, Cllr S Holland.

Motion narrative and action required

This council:

1. Declares that there is a nature emergency, recognising:
 - a. That nature is in long term decline and urgent action must be taken to reverse this, that the UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries - in the bottom 10% globally and the worst in the G7 - and with only about half its biodiversity left that it is far below the global average;
 - b. That a thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society, that it benefits our physical and mental health, feeds us, cleans our air, moderates urban heat, alleviates flooding, absorbs carbon, makes

counties like Dorset beautiful and that its survival and diversity is essential to human life;

- c. That the nature crisis and the climate emergency are intrinsically linked and that the impacts of the climate crisis drive nature's decline, while restoring nature can help to tackle the climate crisis.

2. Notes the positive work already begun and planned by this council including:

- d. The strategic intent as encapsulated in its Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology strategy, alongside the council's role as responsible authority for the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county of Dorset.
- e. The work already undertaken to promote biodiversity in the council's own country parks and greenspaces, farms, highway verges, watercourses, designated areas, woodland, local nature reserves and other natural areas.
- f. Hosting the Dorset National Landscape Partnership and supporting its nature recovery work with a wide range of stakeholders, including coordinating the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve partnership and the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams catchment, and making significant investments in nature through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.

3. Commits to embed nature's recovery at the heart of all strategic plans, including the forthcoming Dorset local plan, policy areas and decision-making processes, building upon the climate decision-wheel and the Nature Recovery Dorset brand.

4. Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, commits to tackling the climate and nature emergencies together and investing in nature-based solutions to the challenges posed by climate change, including mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to increased climate risk such as flooding and extreme summer heat.

5. Facilitate the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset, working with farmers, landowners, businesses, organisations and NGO's so that there are agreed priorities, opportunities and reportable actions to recover nature across Dorset.

6. Set clear strategic and measurable goals for nature's recovery by 2030 and its contribution towards mitigating carbon emissions and increasing our resilience to climate change, for example:

- a. Contributing to the national commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030, in line with the UK's international commitment to biodiversity and the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology strategy and set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset.
- b. Supporting the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscapes to meet/exceed their apportionment of the Environmental Improvement Plan targets

- c. Making space for nature and the long-term maintenance and expansion of the Nature Recovery Network.
- d. Improving biodiversity on Dorset Council land including our farms, highway verge, country parks and other greenspace by, for example planting trees and hedgerows, lowering soil fertility on verges and encouraging community orchards and the establishment of allotments.
- e. Working with farmers, landowners, town & parish councils and other external partners to improve biodiversity, increase tree cover and woodland, and green our streets.
- f. Remove the use of glyphosate and chemicals damaging to ecosystems/nature where possible.
- g. Reducing pressure on wildlife and developing wildlife corridors.
- h. Improving doorstep access to nature, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those wards already identified as having the worst access to nature.
- i. Supporting communities and businesses to make better decisions and take action to support nature's recovery.
- j. Developing a strategic perspective on natural flood management solutions, working with key partners and stakeholders.

In presenting the motion the Leader of the Council proposed and set out the following amendment and this was also seconded by Cllr C Sutton.

To Delete 6(f)

- f. ~~Remove the use of glyphosate and chemicals damaging to ecosystems/nature where possible.~~

And replace with

- f. *Remove or restrict the use of glyphosate and other chemicals damaging to ecosystems/nature and commit to a glyphosate reduction plan.*

And add new paragraph 6(k)

- k. Extend the ban on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on Dorset Council owned land to include new tenancies of our county farm estate.

In accordance with the Procedure Rule 14.3 (a) the Notice of Motion (as amended) was debated and upon being put to the vote the amendment was **CARRIED**.

Following further debate of the substantive motion, it was proposed by Cllr R Bryan and seconded by Cllr S Flower "that this matter be deferred to a future meeting of Council, until after an all-member webinar had been held and a programme for the proposal had been fully costed."

Upon being put to the vote the motion to defer was **LOST**.

EXTENSION OF MEETING BEYOND 3 HOURS (Procedure Rule 8)

In accordance with the Constitution, it was agreed to continue the meeting beyond 3 hours.

The Chair invited members to continue the discussion on the substantive motion and upon being put to the vote the motion was **CARRIED**

Decision (substantive)

That this council:

1. Declares that there is a nature emergency, recognising:
 - (a) That nature is in long term decline and urgent action must be taken to reverse this, that the UK is one of the world's most nature-depleted countries - in the bottom 10% globally and the worst in the G7 - and with only about half its biodiversity left that it is far below the global average;
 - (b) That a thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society, that it benefits our physical and mental health, feeds us, cleans our air, moderates urban heat, alleviates flooding, absorbs carbon, makes counties like Dorset beautiful and that its survival and diversity is essential to human life;
 - (c) That the nature crisis and the climate emergency are intrinsically linked and that the impacts of the climate crisis drive nature's decline, while restoring nature can help to tackle the climate crisis.
2. Notes the positive work already begun and planned by this council including:
 - (d) The strategic intent as encapsulated in its Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology strategy, alongside the council's role as responsible authority for the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the county of Dorset.
 - (e) The work already undertaken to promote biodiversity in the council's own country parks and greenspaces, farms, highway verges, watercourses, designated areas, woodland, local nature reserves and other natural areas.
 - (f) Hosting the Dorset National Landscape Partnership and supporting its nature recovery work with a wide range of stakeholders, including coordinating the Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve partnership and the West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams catchment, and making significant investments in nature through the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme.
3. Commits to embed nature's recovery at the heart of all strategic plans, including the forthcoming Dorset local plan, policy areas and decision-making processes, building upon the climate decision-wheel and the Nature Recovery Dorset brand.

4. Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, commits to tackling the climate and nature emergencies together and investing in nature-based solutions to the challenges posed by climate change, including mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to increased climate risk such as flooding and extreme summer heat.
5. Facilitate the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset, working with farmers, landowners, businesses, organisations and NGO's so that there are agreed priorities, opportunities and reportable actions to recover nature across Dorset.
6. Set clear strategic and measurable goals for nature's recovery by 2030 and its contribution towards mitigating carbon emissions and increasing our resilience to climate change, for example:
 - (a) Contributing to the national commitment to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030, in line with the UK's international commitment to biodiversity and the Natural Environment, Climate and Ecology strategy and set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Dorset.
 - (b) Supporting the Dorset and Cranborne Chase National Landscapes to meet/exceed their apportionment of the Environmental Improvement Plan targets.
 - (c) Making space for nature and the long-term maintenance and expansion of the Nature Recovery Network.
 - (d) Improving biodiversity on Dorset Council land including our farms, highway verge, country parks and other greenspace by, for example planting trees and hedgerows, lowering soil fertility on verges and encouraging community orchards and the establishment of allotments.
 - (e) Working with farmers, landowners, town & parish councils and other external partners to improve biodiversity, increase tree cover and woodland, and green our streets.
 - (f) Remove or restrict the use of glyphosate and other chemicals damaging to ecosystems/nature and commit to a glyphosate reduction plan.
 - (g) Reducing pressure on wildlife and developing wildlife corridors.
 - (h) Improving doorstep access to nature, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those wards already identified as having the worst access to nature.
 - (i) Supporting communities and businesses to make better decisions and take action to support nature's recovery.

- (j) Developing a strategic perspective on natural flood management solutions, working with key partners and stakeholders.
- (k) Extend the ban on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on Dorset Council owned land to include new tenancies of our county farm estate.

32. Election of Vice-Chair Western & Southern Planning Committee

It was proposed by Cllr N Ireland and seconded by Cllr S Bartlett

Decision

That Cllr N Eysenck be elected Vice-Chair of the Western & Southern Planning Committee.

33. Urgent items

There were no urgent items to report.

34. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business to report.

Appendix 1 - Questions and statements from the public

Appendix 2 - Statement from Mr Parlour regarding Petition - Queen Elizabeth Centre

Appendix 3 - Deputation Statement and Response from the Leader of the Council

Appendix 4 - Councillor Questions and Responses

Duration of meeting: 6.30 - 9.38 pm

Chairman

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