

WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

At an Ordinary Meeting of the Council held in the Guildhall, Winchester on 2 April 2014

Attendance:

Councillor Jeffs (The Mayor in the Chair) (P)

Councillors:

Achwal (P)	Mather (P)
Banister (P)	Maynard (P)
Berry E (P)	McLean (P)
Berry J (P)	Miller (P)
Bodtger (P)	Nelmes (P)
Byrnes (P)	Newman-McKie (P)
Chamberlain	Pearce (P)
Clear (P)	Pearson (P)
Coates (P)	Phillips (P)
Collin (P)	Pines (P)
Cook (P)	Power (P)
Cutler (P)	Prowse (P)
Evans (P)	Read (P)
Gemmell (P)	Ruffell (P)
Godfrey (P)	Rutter (P)
Gottlieb (P)	Sanders (P)
Green (P)	Scott (P)
Henry (P)	Southgate (P)
Hiscock (P)	Stallard (P)
Humby (P)	Tait (P)
Hutchison (P)	Tod (P)
Huxstep (P)	Verney (P)
Izard (P)	Warwick (P)
Johnston (P)	Weir (P)
Laming	Weston (P)
Learney (P)	Witt (P)
Lipscomb (P)	Wood (P)
Mason (P)	Wright (P)

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20 February 2014 be approved and adopted.

2. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR**

The Mayor announced that five Members had decided not to seek re-election on 22 May 2014. In accordance with the Council's usual practice, he presented certificates in recognition of their public service as follows:-

Cllr Lynda Banister – who had served since May 2010.

Cllr Tony Coates – who had served since May 2003.

Cllr Brian Collin – who had served since May 1986.

Cllr Ray Pearce – who had served since May 1986 (and was Mayor in 1994/95).

Cllr Keith Wood – who had served since May 2006 and had been Leader of the Council for the last two years.

The Mayor then reminded Members about a special event on Friday 4 April from 5pm in the Guildhall arranged to thank officers and partner agencies for their work in the response to the recent flooding across the District.

The Mayor also referred to a production of Peter and the Wolf to be held in the Cathedral on Thursday 1 May at 7.30pm and reported that tickets were available from the Cathedral, the Tourist Information Centre or from him.

The Mayor then reminded Council of the Mayor's Ball for this year which was to take the form of an Ambassadors Ball and was to be held in the Guildhall on Friday 11 April.

3. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised that the Council would help to ensure that residents and businesses received the maximum benefit from Government schemes to mitigate the impact from the recent flooding across the District.

Particular attention was drawn to the Council's close working with the County Council with regard to the collection of the 13,000 sandbags previously distributed to the affected areas. Consultation by the County Council on proposed flood alleviation works was awaited.

Finally, the Leader thanked officers and partner agencies for their collective response in dealing with the flooding.

4. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Having regard to their roles as Hampshire County Councillors, Councillors Humby, Huxstep, Mather, Stallard and Tod each declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter on the agenda which may have a County Council involvement. Councillor Godfrey made the same declaration due to his

role as a County Council employee. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they all remained in the room under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee, to participate and vote in all such matters.

5. **QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14**

1. Changes to Housing Benefits – Vulnerable Tenants

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Organisational Development, Councillor Godfrey, answered a question from Councillor Nelmes.

2. Information Technology Service for Councillors

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Organisational Development, Councillor Godfrey, answered a question from Councillor Cook.

3. Abbey Mill Reopening Timetable

The Portfolio Holder for Business Services, Councillor Miller, answered a question from Councillor Read.

4. Solar Farms

The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, Councillor Weston, answered a question from Councillor Hutchison.

5. Town Team Manager

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Councillor Humby, answered a question from Councillor McLean.

6. Supporting People Funding

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Coates, answered a question from Councillor Hiscock.

7. Council Finances and Predicted Deficit

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, answered a question from Councillor Ruffell.

8. Leaf Clearance

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Environment, Councillor Warwick, answered a question from Councillor Banister.

9. Independent Retailers Study

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Councillor Humby, answered a question from Councillor Mather.

10. Levels of Affordable Housing

The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, Councillor Weston, answered a question from Councillor Learney.

11. Textile Banks

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Environment, Councillor Warwick, answered a question from Councillor Stallard.

12. Denmead Neighbourhood Plan

The Portfolio Holder for Built Environment, Councillor Weston, answered a question from Councillor Power.

13. Living Wage

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Organisational Development, Councillor Godfrey, answered a question from Councillor Gemmell.

14. Stanmore Community Centre and Carroll Centre

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, answered a question from Councillor Byrnes.

15. Parking Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Environment, Councillor Warwick, answered a question from Councillor Gottlieb.

16. Refuse Bins

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Environment, Councillor Warwick, answered a question from Councillor Tait.

17. Reducing the Impact of Flooding

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, answered a question from Councillor Southgate.

18. Barron Close Housing Scheme

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, answered a question from Councillor Tait.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDED MINUTES**

Cabinet – 19 March 2014

Flood Support Schemes

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, moved that Cabinet Recommended Minute 553 be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Recommended Minute 553 be approved and adopted.

Cabinet – 19 March 2014

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 24 March 2014

Governance Review – Financial Limits in the Constitution

The Recommended Minute from The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was attached to Report CL95, which was circulated with a Supplementary Agenda after the statutory deadline. The Mayor decided to accept the report and the attached minutes onto the agenda, as matters requiring urgent consideration, in view of the need to make the decisions at this meeting.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, moved that Cabinet Recommended Minute 553 be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet Recommended Minute 557 be approved and adopted.

2. That Recommended Minute 2 of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in Report CL95, be noted.

Cabinet – 19 March 2014

Recorded Votes at Budget Council Meetings

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Wood, moved that Cabinet Recommended Minute 558 be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet Recommended Minute 558 be approved and adopted.

Planning Development Control Committee – 27 March 2014

The Recommended Minute of the Planning Development Control Committee was attached to Report CL95, which was circulated with a Supplementary Agenda after the statutory deadline. The Mayor decided to accept the report and the attached minutes onto the agenda, as matters requiring urgent consideration, in view of the need to make the decisions at this meeting.

The Chairman of the Planning Development Control Committee, Councillor Ruffell, moved that Recommended Minute 3 in Report CL95 be approved and adopted.

Council also agreed to appointments to the Joint West of Waterlooville MDA Planning Committee and that the membership be reviewed at Annual Council on 4 June 2014.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Planning Development Control Committee Recommended Minute 3 as set out in Report CL95, be approved and adopted.

2. That the following appointments to the Joint West of Waterlooville MDA Planning Committee be agreed, and that the membership be reviewed at Annual Council on 4 June 2014:

Councillors Ruffell (Chairman) and Councillors Read and Pearson (Conservative deputies – Councillors Lipscomb and McLean) and Councillors Clear and Evans (Liberal Democrat deputies – Councillors Izard and Rutter)

7. NOTICES OF MOTION

1. The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor J Berry

“This Council noting its decision to adopt a Living Wage for its directly employed staff at its meeting on 21 February 2013, and recognising as it does in CAB 2549 (HSG):-

i) That an annual household income of over £63,000 is needed to purchase a home, with significantly higher levels in some parts of the District.

ii) That the current programme of welfare reforms creates further uncertainty over how a number of those facing homelessness might achieve a housing solution which is affordable to them. Similarly levels of fuel poverty in turn can impact significantly upon housing affordability.

iii) Of applicants on the Winchester housing register, approximately 80% of those households have an income below £15,000 a year.

Council believes that a fairer Winchester will mean a better Winchester, and that the examples above indicate some of the inequalities that can and should be addressed.

Council resolves to establish a Fairness Commission to investigate and advance equality of opportunity and outcome for all residents of Winchester.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor Pines.

Councillor Berry drew Council’s attention to the fact that although Winchester had been recently rated as one of the top ten places to live in the UK, this was not the experience of all its residents. For example, house prices were greater than the national average and a significant proportion, due to their income, were not able to afford to buy their own home. In summary, Winchester had a diverse population and the benefits of living in the area should be more equitable.

Councillor Berry explained that a Fairness Commission would endeavour to provide tangible improvements to residents’ health and wellbeing, their housing and also to address any age related issues. A Commission would operate at arms length from the Council and would prioritise appropriate policies across all partner organisations. It would also provide the Council with the opportunity for improved engagement with residents, notably utilising the views of younger people in delivering outcomes.

In conclusion, Councillor Berry stated that a Fairness Commission would celebrate the existing positive work already being delivered to achieve equality of opportunity and was a practical and preventative approach to the matter.

During debate and in support of the Motion, some Members highlighted various instances of economic irregularities across the District. This included that evidenced by some areas having fewer pupils attending the highest achieving schools and sixth form colleges, adult disengagement (including young people not in education or employment), rural isolation (especially the of the elderly), a ‘dysfunctional’ housing market, expensive retailing and increased instances of fuel poverty. It was noted that although the Council was encouraging greater provision of affordable housing (including from its own programme of development), there remained an disparity between wages and houses prices across the District.

Some Members welcomed closer working with partner organisations especially to maximise equality of opportunity for all residents. It was pointed out that a Commission would need to have well defined terms of reference and reporting structure.

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be referred to a future meeting of Cabinet for further investigation.

2. The following Notice of Motion had been submitted by Councillor Evans.

“This Council supports the residents of Wickham and Knowle and rejects any proposals to place sports pitches within the land in the Winchester District known as ‘The Knowle Triangle’ as proposed in Fareham Borough Council’s Welborne Master Plan. This Council reaffirms its position that this green buffer gap between Knowle and Fareham’s proposed Welborne settlement should remain as open and undeveloped land without any built structures or formal open spaces within it and requests Cabinet and officers respond to any consultations or planning applications accordingly.”

With the leave of the Mayor, Councillor Evans proposed revised wording of the Motion as follows:

“This Council reiterates the policy in the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 that the triangle of land between Knowle and the proposed Fareham SDA (now known as ‘Welborne’) should retain an open and undeveloped rural character forming an important green buffer gap between the two settlements. The Council believes that this will be best achieved and secured for the long term by the inclusion of the land as part of the SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) for Welborne. The Council considers that the appropriate use of the land within the SANGS definition would be for conservation, grazing or informal recreation none of which should involve the construction of any buildings, significant engineering works or urban features such as formal sports pitches, urban fencing, car parking or artificial lighting”.

The revised Motion was seconded by Councillor Weston.

Following debate, the revised Motion was agreed, as set out above and would form the basis of the Council’s response to Fareham Borough Council’s consultations on its Local Plan Part 3: The Welborne Plan. The response was to be formally issued by individual Portfolio Holder Notice in time for Fareham Borough Council’s submission deadline of 11 April 2014.

8. **MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Gemmell replace Councillor Tait on The Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting commenced at 8.45pm and concluded at 10.50pm.

The Mayor