

## **COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, 23 September 2020**

**Attendance:**

Councillors Present

Cunningham (Mayor)

Achwal  
Becker  
Bell  
Bentote  
Bronk  
Brook  
Clear  
Clementson  
Cook  
Craske  
Cutler  
Evans  
Ferguson  
Fern  
Gemmell  
Godfrey  
Gordon-Smith  
Hiscock  
Horrill  
Humby

Hutchison  
Laming  
Learney  
Lumby  
Mather  
McLean  
Miller  
Murphy  
Pearson  
Porter  
Power  
Prince  
Read  
Ruffell  
Scott  
Thompson  
Tod  
Weir  
Weston  
Williams

**Apologies for Absence:**

Councillors Green, Griffiths and Rutter

[A full audio and video recording of this meeting is available](#)

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1. **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 8TH JULY 2020**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 8 July 2020 be approved and adopted

## 2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Hiscock, Humby, Tod and Porter declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of agenda item 5 a) (Revised General Fund Budget 2020/21) due to their roles as County Councillors. Councillor Scott also declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of the same agenda item as he was a tenant of the council.

## 3. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE.**

The Mayor made a number of announcements.

The Mayor's thoughts were with the families and pupils of Henry Beaufort school in Winchester following the horrific incident earlier this month involving a school bus. The Mayor gave credit to the swift action of the emergency services, including the city council who attended the scene.

The Mayor then announced that past mayors will have been particularly saddened to have learnt of the passing in July of former macebearer for the city council, Denis Price. Mr Price had carried the great mace for over 30 years, and the smaller maces for several years before that. Several past mayors and officers had attended Denis' funeral in August.

The Mayor then referred to the unexpected death of Michael Fawcitt and paid tribute to him as a valued member of TACT in the role Communication Officer and as Chair of the Housing Management Delivery Group and as an enthusiastic participant in committee meetings.

The Mayor then reported on his recent visits to the Winchester Churches Nightshelter, as well as Trinity Winchester. He had also taken the salute at the Phase One Passing Out Parade at Sir John Moore Barracks.

Continuing, the Mayor gave his thanks to ward members who had assisted in organising visits to their communities to enable him to show support and thanks to the local groups and organisations who helped support their residents so well during the lockdown. He was looking forward to visiting other wards in the near future.

The Mayor then announced that he had been honoured to have laid a wreath on behalf of the council at the war memorial at the cathedral on 15 August on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VJ Day.

The Mayor then referred to the recent launch of the Mayor of Winchester's Local Hero award. This award was to recognise people who had made a real difference during the COVID-19 pandemic. It offered residents the chance to say thank you to all the unsung heroes across the Winchester district who have been putting others first during this extraordinary time.

The Mayor requested that members consider those Local Heroes in the communities that they represent who they would like to nominate. Winners would receive a Mayor of Winchester Local Hero Award certificate.

The Mayor's next announcement was with regard to his recent presenting, in Abbey House, to the former Mayor, Councillor Eleanor Bell and her escort Mr Alex Bell, with their Past Mayor's and Past Mayor's Escort badges. Also attending were the Leader of the Council, Councillor Thompson and the Chief Executive. Following the presentation, Councillor Bell thanked the Mayor's Secretary and the Events Assistant and the Senior Mace Bearer for their support to both her and her escort during her mayoral year.

Finally, the Mayor invited members to join him in offering the best thanks of council to Steve Tilbury, Strategic Director, who was leaving the council at the end of September after 18 years of service.

The Leader then made several announcements.

The Council was in advanced discussion with Courts and Tribunal Service with regard to the use of the Guildhall as one of its 'Nightingale Courts'. There were also plans to situate a local testing unit in Winchester. Members would be updated in due course with regard to progress of both of these. Finally, the Leader advised that the next edition of About Winchester was about to go on line by the end of the week.

The Chief Executive, referred to recent government guidance regarding the COVID 19 pandemic. The Council had sent advice to businesses regarding the track and test app and the new QR code and had started work on the council's approach to support those on low income who were to self-isolate as a response to a positive test. The council's local response centre was still in place and the offices were now a 'COVID secure workplace' allowing staff to work at home or in the office as their job's demand. The situation continued to be monitored carefully and all necessary actions would be taken to support the district over the coming months.

The Chief Executive then announced apologies for the meeting.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Three written questions had been received which were presented by the members of the public at the meeting along with an associated supplementary question. The questions and the response from the Cabinet Member were subsequently set out in full on the [council's website](#).

5. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES:**

- (i) **Cabinet - 16 September 2020 - Revised General Fund Budget 2020/21 (CAB3256)**

Council noted that that the corresponding recommended minute of Cabinet held 16 September 2020 was included with the supplementary agenda after the statutory deadline. The Mayor agreed to accept the recommended minute onto the agenda, because of the urgent need for Council to consider this alongside Report CAB3256.

Councillor Cutler (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk), moved that the recommended minute be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Housing).

Council proceeded to ask questions and debate the matters in the report and recommended minute.

Following questions and debate, in accordance with legislative requirements on recorded votes at Budget Meetings, a recorded vote was taken on recommendations 1 and 2 of the cabinet recommended minute as set out in the supplementary agenda.

It was noted that Councillor Clementson had left the meeting before the recorded vote was taken.

#### Division Lists

#### **The following Members voted in favour of the recommended minute of Cabinet:**

Councillors Achwal, Becker, Bell, Bentote, Bronk, Clear, Craske, Cutler, Evans, Fern, Ferguson, Gordon-Smith, Hiscock, Hutchison, Laming, Learney, Murphy, Porter, Power, Prince, Thompson, Tod, Weir, Williams

#### **The following Members voted against the recommended minute of Cabinet:**

None

#### **The following Members abstained from voting on the recommended minute of Cabinet:**

Councillors Brook, Cook, Cunningham, Gemmell, Godfrey, Horrill, Humby, Lumby, Mather, Mclean, Miller, Pearson, Read, Ruffell, Scott, Weston

Recommendations 1 and 2 of the cabinet recommended minute carried.

Council then proceeded to vote on recommendation 3 of the cabinet recommended minute, which was also carried.

RESOLVED:

1. The Revised Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 1 to Report CAB3256 be approved
2. The Revised Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 to Report CAB3256 be approved
3. The efforts of community groups and local councils in supporting essential work to support our district is recognised and that the Leader of the council writes to all groups to thank them for their ongoing support.

(ii) **Scrutiny Committee - 2 July 2020 - Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 (SC026)**

Councillor Brook (Chairperson of the Scrutiny Committee), moved that the recommended minute be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Lumby).

RESOLVED:

That the Council note the Annual Scrutiny Report.

6. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, a Motion was submitted by Councillor Horrill as follows. The Motion was seconded by Councillor Brook.

“That this Council, in developing its Strategic Issues and Options as part of the forthcoming update of the Winchester Local Plan, and as part of its participation in the refresh of the PfSH Sub-Regional Strategy, supports the principle of a South Hampshire Green Belt designation for the countryside north of the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, to prevent coalescence of our towns and villages; and that support for this designation be sought with neighbouring authorities.”

Councillor Horrill introduced the Motion and in summary raised the following points:

- Designation of a south Hampshire Green Belt should be considered with all issues and options for the new Local Plan. It should also be considered as part of the council's participation in the refresh of the PfSH sub regional strategy.
- There has been considerable development in south Hampshire during recent years. During lockdown, there had been greater appreciation of countryside and role in wellbeing of open spaces etc
- Government consultation papers suggest that the duty to cooperate with neighbouring authorities was to be removed. Therefore, there could be

increased development towards local authority borders in the future. This council therefore needed to be clear where countryside should be protected.

- Recent CPRE research regarding Green Belts showed that they provide benefits to the local economy and to health, wellbeing and to ecosystems to value of £26 million per annum. The health and wellbeing element of this from those living in and around a Green Belt was £17 million. There was a need to reinvigorate the local economy following the COVID -19 pandemic. A Green Belt would help with tourism and recreation benefits to tune of £1.3m per annum.
- The council should promote a genuine 'brownfield first' approach to development. Town centres may need to be repurposed for housing should retail further decline. A Green Belt would promote urban regeneration, check urban sprawl and safeguard countryside and preserve the setting and special character of the district's historic towns.
- The council should align and work in partnership with other local authorities and with MPs regarding the principle of the designation of a south Hampshire Green Belt.

During the debate which followed on the Motion, in summary, the following points were raised:

- The presence South Downs National Park in the district, as well as the government's recent pledges to increase housing numbers in the Winchester district, would mean that the proposals for a south Hampshire Green Belt would push unsustainable development to the west, north and north east of Winchester as well as into existing settlements. This would put pressure on existing infrastructure. A fair and equitable distribution of housing in the district in sustainable locations was necessary.
- There were historical ideas for a 'solent city' with 'green lung' areas. The environment was at the core of the council's policies and uncontrolled urban sprawl was at odds with this. There must be a fair and equitable distribution of housing, together with inclusion of 'green lungs'. There was pressure from development close the borders of the district in some of the southern wards.
- Countryside was being lost to urbanisation and this impacted on biodiversity and recreational opportunities. There needed to be green corridors for wildlife etc.
- The council was a member of the PfSH partnership which was investigating the feasibility of a Green Belt in the district. The outcome this investigation was awaited with interest.
- The council was also examining how the three new descriptors of land (growth, renew and protect) could be used to protect green spaces across the district.

**AMENDMENT - Moved by Councillor Porter and seconded by Councillor Tod, as follows:**

“That the motion regarding designation of South Hampshire Green Belt for the countryside north of the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, be referred to Cabinet after consideration by the Local Plan Advisory Group of the issues raised this evening in relation to the motion, including:-

- The Government’s proposed increase in the district’s housing target to more than 10,000 houses in the next 10 years – and the consequent risk that the proposal concentrates a damaging amount of additional housing to the north, west and north east of Winchester
- The Government’s white paper “Planning for the Future” and the expectation that the Government is seeking agility in protecting green spaces by its designation of Growth, Renew, Protect
- Whether there are better mechanisms to protect green space right across the whole district
- The implication for building homes where they are needed in the district, when 40% is also covered by the National Park.
- The results if the investigation into the feasibility of a Green Belt as part of our membership of PfSH”

The meeting then proceed to debate the Amendment to the Motion and in summary, the following points were raised:

- The CPRE report regarding designation of a Green Belt was originally produced before the government’s declarations regarding reform of planning and housing numbers. There must firstly be detailed consideration of this and also having regard to other factors such as the proximity of the national park.
- Additional debate on the proposal was welcomed as should be discussed as part of the issues and options regarding the new local plan. The effective use of land for building new houses would help protect the most valuable countryside areas.
- Consideration of the planning reform proposals was deflecting away from the council’s debate of a Green Belt.
- By taking the proposal firstly to the Local Plan Advisory Group and then to the Cabinet would delay in bringing neighbouring authorities together to collectively debate a possible Green Belt.
- The supporting evidence provided by the New Economics Foundation for the CPRE for making its case for a Green Belt could equally be applied to

the whole of the district and should be considered as part of any pilot for the next local plan.

- Wider discussion of the principle of designation of the Green Belt would be welcomed, but must not delay dialogue with neighbouring local authorities. Must be able to bring forward in time as part of the local plan and before implementation of the white paper housing numbers.
- There must be wider discussion on housing number allocations which had increased for this district more so than for other areas.
- There was work to be done before the council was able to consider the Green Belt proposal further. It should be discussed in the context of the whole district and the housing numbers now proposed.
- A Green Belt was part of the strategic issues and options and should been discussed urgently.

The meeting then voted on the Amendment to the Motion.

#### **AMENDMENT CARRIED**

The meeting then proceeded to debate the Original Motion, as amended – which was now the Substantive Motion. In summary, the following points were raised:

- Each of the five purposes of a Green Belt as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework were relevant to protect the needs of the whole district.
- A Green Belt policy did not forbid any appropriate development within it.

#### **MOTION - Moved by Councillor Evans, as follows:**

“That the Substantive Motion (the Original Motion as Amended) be now put.”

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

Before voting on the Substantive Motion (Original Motion as Amended), the mover of the original Motion (Councillor Horrill) then gave her right of reply.

#### **SUBSTANTIVE MOTION (THE ORIGINAL MOTION AS AMENDED) CARRIED**

##### **RESOLVED:**

“That the motion regarding designation of South Hampshire Green Belt for the countryside north of the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton (*as set out below*), be referred to Cabinet after consideration by the Local Plan Advisory Group of the issues raised at this meeting in relation to the motion, including:-



- The Government's proposed increase in the district's housing target to more than 10,000 houses in the next 10 years – and the consequent risk that the proposal concentrates a damaging amount of additional housing to the north, west and north east of Winchester
- the Government's white paper "Planning for the Future" and the expectation that the Government is seeking agility in protecting green spaces by its designation of Growth, Renew, Protect
- whether there are better mechanisms to protect green space right across the whole district
- the implication for building homes where they are needed in the district, when 40% is also covered by the National Park.
- the results if the investigation into the feasibility of a Green Belt as part of our membership of PfSH

"That this Council, in developing its Strategic Issues and Options as part of the forthcoming update of the Winchester Local Plan, and as part of its participation in the refresh of the PfSH Sub-Regional Strategy, supports the principle of a South Hampshire Green Belt designation for the countryside north of the cities of Portsmouth and Southampton, to prevent coalescence of our towns and villages; and that support for this designation be sought with neighbouring authorities."

## 7. **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

The Strategic Director (Resources) advised that following the recent resignation of a councillor, both groups had been consulted on any impact on the proportionality of the council. It was agreed that no changes to seats on committees were required other than as a direct consequence of the resignation, as set out below.

RESOLVED:

For the Business and Housing Policy Committee, Councillor Gordon-Smith to replace former Councillor Gottlieb as a deputy member.

## 8. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

17 written questions had been received of which 15 were heard at the meeting along with any associated supplementary questions. All questions are set out in full on the [council's website](#), together with responses from the relevant Cabinet Member.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.45 pm

The Mayor