

COUNCIL

Thursday, 30 November 2023

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Clear (Chairperson)

Batho	Lee
Becker	Morris
Brook	Pett
Brophy	Porter
Chamberlain	Power
Cook	Prest
Cramoysan	Rutter
Cunningham	Scott
Eve	Small
Godfrey	Thompson
Gordon-Smith	Tippett-Cooper
Greenberg	Tod
Horrill	Wallace
Kurn	Westwood
Laming	Williams
Langford-Smith	Wise
Learney	

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Achwal S, Achwal V, Bolton, Cutler, Edwards, Isaacs, Miller, Pearson, Reach, Read and Warwick

[Video recording of meeting](#)

1. **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2023**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 20 September 2023 be approved and adopted.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Porter and Tod declared personal (but not prejudicial) interests in respect of various agenda items due to their role as County Councillors.

Councillor Becker declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 (c) (motion relating to investment in fossil fuels) and left the room during council's consideration of that item.

Councillor Learney declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 8 (c) (motion relating to investment in fossil fuels) and left the room during council's consideration of that item.

Councillor Godfrey declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of agenda item 8 (c) (motion relating to investment in fossil fuels) as he was an employee of Hampshire County Council and a contributor to the Hampshire Local Government Pension Fund.

Councillor Brophy declared a personal (but not prejudicial) interest in respect of agenda item 8 (c) (motion relating to investment in fossil fuels) as his spouse was an employee of a private pension fund organisation.

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

The Mayor highlighted some of the many events that she would be attending during the festive season. She then advised the meeting that former councillor and Mayor of Winchester (2007 - 08) Chris Pines, was unwell and residing in a hospice in Winchester. Finally, the Mayor invited all members of the council and officers to Abbey House on Wednesday 6 December for mince pies and mulled wine.

The Leader then announced that he had received information from Hampshire NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) regarding proposed changes to local hospital and health services in Winchester and Basingstoke, including constructing a new hospital at Basingstoke potentially close to Junction 7 of the M3. Recognising the need for investment, the Leader advised that the council would work closely with the ICB and the local hospital trust to bring about investment in hospital services at Winchester and also to respond to queries regarding the proposals. Recognising that all councillors should have a role in scrutinising these proposals the Health and Environment Policy Committee would convene an additional meeting at the end of January 2024 where there was to be a presentation from the hospital team. The feedback from this meeting would inform the council's consultation response.

The Chief Executive announced apologies for the meeting.

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

One written question had been received from a member of the public who attended the meeting to present their question. A supplementary question was also asked. The question received and its response was subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

5. **TO RECEIVE PETITIONS**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16, a petition was submitted by Mr D Gibson regarding abolishing free parking between 7pm and 8am in Winchester city centre car parks. The details of the petition was set out on the agenda. Mr Gibson and Mr d'Arcy-Hughes introduced their petition.

Councillor Learney (Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency) responded to the matters in the petition as summarised as follows:

- 1250 spaces in the council's 'park and walk' car parks remained free after 5pm, with less than a 10-minute walk to the city centre.
- The impact to changes to tariffs were monitored and community groups and businesses continued to be engaged.
- Winchester BID footfall data showed no appreciable difference to night-time visitors to the city centre compared to before the new tariff was implemented.
- Most hospitality staff started their shifts before 7pm and those starting after this time would not be impacted by the changes.
- The new one-hour tariff would go live from tomorrow and was a consequence of the council's consultation with subscription-based businesses. A volunteer permit scheme was also now in place. Blue badges were valid in un-barriered car parks.
- The Winchester Movement Strategy was adopted in spring 2019 as council policy and the tariff changes were in support of its three aims – to reduce city centre traffic, support healthier lifestyle choices, and support sustainable growth.
- The introduction of evening car parking charges was part of the council's long-term strategy to improve the quality of life for residents and to make Winchester a more pleasant place for visitors.
- Community organisations operated at all times of the day in the city centre when parking charges had already been in operation.

Council then proceeded to debate the petition and matters therein and in summary, the following matters were raised:

- There was plenty of free car parking that was a short walk away from the city centre. The Cattle Market car park was also on a more accessible walking route when compared to Tower Street Multi Story car park.
- The new tariffs had been implemented stating they would maintain accessibility to the city centre whilst bringing about various environmental benefits. In reality, their introduction was to generate new income and the negative impact on residents and businesses had been significant. Consultation feedback had been ignored.
- There was linkage previously agreed that to improve air quality, parking prices in the city centre should be increased.
- Footfall and vacancy rates in the city centre continued to be monitored.
- Responding to feedback, some unforeseen consequences had required some adjustments or change to the scheme.
- Evening parking charges were not uncompetitive and were in place across Hampshire.

- The outcomes achieved by the new tariffs demonstrated that the council was moving ahead with improving air quality in the city centre, whilst ensuring that footfall remained high, vacancy rates remained low, and the night-time economy continued to thrive.
- If the new tariffs were an issue for some people, car sharing should be encouraged, and this also would assist with improving air quality. Everyone should challenge what they would normally want to do to help achieve improved air quality for all.
- Improving air quality and making safer streets in the city centre was vital to many people and the council must achieve these through all measures such as increasing parking tariffs.
- If there has not been a positive impact on air quality improvement and a detrimental impact on footfall etc, would the changes to charges then be reviewed?
- The Winchester BID Board has reported that there has not been any detrimental impact on footfall to the city centre.
- There are residents in the city centre who would wish to benefit from cleaner air.
- Residents from across the district who engaged with regular services and community groups in the city centre were subject to a negative cumulative impact from the new tariffs and were therefore penalised. Those who have an occasional dinner out (for example) were less impacted.
- Supporting our communities should be central to everything the council does. There could be balances that were needed to achieve our objectives, such as those related to air quality etc.

At conclusion of debate, Councillor Learney reiterated that it was cheaper to park in the city centre in the evening compared to the daytime and was also cheaper than travelling by bus. The evening parking charges had not had any impact on city centre footfall and acknowledged this information would continue to be monitored, along with improvements to air quality.

RESOLVED:

That the petitioner be thanked for bringing the matter forward and it be noted that that Council will not support the request of the petition to reverse the council's decision to abolish free parking between 7pm and 8am in Winchester city centre car parks.

6. **REVIEW OF THE WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION 2023 (CL169)**

Councillor Becker (Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement) moved that the recommendations in report CL169 be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management).

Council agreed that it did not need to ask questions or debate the matters in the report and its appendices.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council note the comments and recommendations of the Audit and Governance Committee as set out in Appendix 1.
2. That Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendix 2.
3. That Council authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any necessary further changes to the proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution in relation to formatting, numbering or such other changes consequential to or incidental to the intentions of Council.

7. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTE OF CABINET HELD 21 NOVEMBER 2023 - 59 COLEBROOK STREET – REFURBISHMENT AND CONVERSION TO SHARED ACCOMMODATION FOR USE BY UKRAINIAN AND AFGHANISTAN GUESTS (CAB3433)**

Councillor Westwood (Cabinet Member for Housing) moved that the recommended minute of Cabinet be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency).

Council proceeded to debate the matters in the recommended minute and report. There were no questions asked.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve a capital budget of £610,000 to refurbish 59 Colebrook Street to provide temporary homeless accommodation, funded by £250k grant from HCC, £206k grant from LAHF, and £154k of prudential borrowing.

8. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, three motions had been submitted for council.

(i) **Motion submitted by Councillor Batho – Vaping products**

The motion had been submitted by Councillor Batho as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Porter. The motion was introduced.

Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- Society seemingly continued to promote things that were detrimental to young people's health.
- Vapes can be a positive way for adults to wean themselves off smoking cigarettes.
- A ban on all vape products would be preferable, but the motion as presented was a starting point.

- In the USA, there had been some evidence that banning some vaping products has seen an increase in smoking. In some instances, young people were using nitrous oxide cannisters, which was a greater concern than vapes.
- The lack of recyclability of disposable vapes was an issue, but there could be unintended consequences of a ban from more smoking.
- Although cigarettes were more harmful, vapes are cheaper and more attractive to younger people and easier to get obtain – and their detrimental impact on developing lungs had been proven. Children used vapes more than who had previously been observed smoking.
- The key issue of the motion before council was regarding the principle of disposable vapes being able to be thrown away into general waste (or inadvertently into recycling) at the end of their use, to the detriment of the environment.
- The health benefits of vaping for adults who already smoke and then turn to vaping products had been proven.
- The ingredients and materials in vaping products was unregulated. The lithium batteries within the units can cause fires amongst recycling.
- Banning plastic straws, but not disposable vapes was illogical.

Following the proposer of motion (Councillor Batho) exercising his right to respond to the debate, council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That Council resolves:

1. To support the Local Government Association call for a ban on the sale and manufacture of disposable vapes by 2024 and that disposable vaping products be regulated through the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in a similar way as other single-use items, such as bans on plastic straws.
2. That the Leader write to Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to express Council's support for the banning of the disposable vaping products detailed in this motion.
3. That the Council should respond to any future consultation on the banning of the sale and manufacture of disposable vaping products by supporting such a ban.

(ii) Motion submitted by Councillor Godfrey – carbon neutrality projects

The motion had been submitted by Councillor Godfrey as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Brook. The motion was introduced.

Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- The council was confident that it was able to deliver, within the district, any offsetting required regarding the council's carbon footprint.

- Tree planting and other nature-based solutions take several years to have an impact regarding carbon benefits.
- Other projects such as, for example, investment in EV charging at Barfield 2 and initiatives such as energy monitoring and promoting active travel may fall foul to the detail expressed by motion.
- All substantive council projects were considered according to the usual council approvals process, including policy committees and scrutiny. If an objective of a project was to achieve carbon neutrality goals, and this was not proven to not have the necessary impact, then it would be rejected.
- It was not clear which type of climate action projects the motion would want to exclude.
- Winchester City Council's performance in Hampshire and the UK regarding its climate actions was good compared to other councils.
- The council should increase ambition and action on the climate emergency. This would also improve the lives of residents now through various measures and initiatives, such as insulating homes.
- Regarding carbon offsetting outside of the district, this was likely to be a last measure of resort.
- Carbon reduction measures were a global issue and could not be localised to the Winchester district. The council should embrace any project that would have a positive affect on the whole planet.
- All forms of energy have some impact on the planet. Solar energy projects would not help meet carbon net zero targets and these also produced pollutants during their manufacture. Projects should not cause any additional environmental issues.
- All investment should be made in the district for the benefit of its residents and should reduce carbon footprint in real terms.
- Urgent action regarding carbon reduction was required and should not include offsetting with carbon credits.

Following the proposer of motion (Councillor Godfrey) exercising his right to respond to the debate, council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the motion proposed by Councillor Godfrey (seconded by Councillor Brook) be not supported.

(iii) Motion submitted by Councillor Morris – Hampshire Pension Fund and divestment in fossil fuels.

The motion had been submitted by Councillor Morris as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Tippet-Cooper. The motion was introduced.

Council then debated the matters in the motion. In summary the following points were raised:

- Councils are key to affect climate action, but this was potentially undermined by local authority pension funds funding fossil fuels.

- Councillors do not contribute to the Hampshire Pension Fund, nor have the right to interfere with the business of other organisations.
- Future beneficiaries rely on the security of the fund and can express their view to the pension board regarding their investments. Hasty divestment could threaten the fund.
- The largest energy companies were already looking at diversification in more sustainable models.
- The motion proposed to inspire the Hampshire Pension Fund to move faster on this matter.
- It is not the council's business to be advising on the appropriateness of the fund's investments.
- Energy companies were already moving towards greener alternatives and therefore they should not be considered at this time regarding divestment.
- Individuals can opt out of pension funds.
- The government backed National Employment Savings Trust Scheme (the UK's biggest pension fund) had recently announced divestment from fossil fuels.
- It was possible to encourage pension schemes to divest - but it was appreciated that you cannot tell them to do so.
- The motion as presented was for divestment by 2030, as to do so at a later time was too late,

AMENDMENT – Moved by Councillor Lee and seconded by Councillor Wallace:

Add additional c) at paragraph 6 of the Motion as proposed, to read:

“To actively consider creation of a Green Fund, at least £25million of the Hampshire Pension Fund, for investment bids in Hampshire wide Green projects to deliver climate and nature benefits in the fight against Climate Change and Nature crises. This fund to be open for bids by all Hampshire Local Authorities who can demonstrate projects meet FCA and pension fund ‘Return on Investment’ (ROI) rules.”

Council proceeded to then debate the matters in the Amendment. In summary the following points were raised:

- The council can not be seen to constrain pension trustees in their investments, nor assume officer resource in making bids for funds.
- There should be policy discussion about how to utilise investment in the Hampshire Pension Fund to drive change to de-carbonise and to tackle the nature emergency etc, recognising the need for a strong financial return.
- The intent behind the Amendment was good however contributors to the pension fund (those employed in the public sector in Hampshire) would be those receiving investments from the pension fund.
- The Amendment could lead the council closer to being involved in pension fund investments.

Following the proposer of original motion (Councillor Morris) exercising his right to reply to the debate on the Amendment, council then voted on the Amendment as set out above.

AMENDMENT LOST

Following the seconder of motion (unamended) (Councillor Tippett-Cooper) exercising his right to respond to the debate, council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

This Council instructs the Leader to write to the Chair of the Hampshire Pension Fund Panel and Board asking the Board:

- a) To commit the Hampshire Pension Fund to divest from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel equities and corporate bonds as soon as possible with a deadline of 2030; and
- b) To actively seek to invest in companies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimise climate risk and where possible provide local environmental benefits,

while ensuring the Fund continues to generate a sufficient level of return to ensure the current and future sustainability of the fund.

9. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

There were no changes made to committee membership for council to approve

10. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

13 written questions had been received which were heard at the meeting along with 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 7.00 pm and concluded at 10.10 pm

The Mayor