

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

Attendance:

Councillors Present

Clear (Chairperson)

Achwal S	Lee
Achwal V	Morris
Bolton	Pearson
Brook	Pett
Brophy	Porter
Chamberlain	Power
Cook	Prest
Cramoysan	Reach
Cunningham	Read
Cutler	Rutter
Edwards	Scott
Eve	Small
Godfrey	Thompson
Gordon-Smith	Tippett-Cooper
Greenberg	Tod
Horrill	Wallace
Isaacs	Warwick
Laming	Westwood
Langford-Smith	Williams
Learney	Wise

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Batho, Becker, Kurn and Miller

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1. **MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2023 AND THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 17 MAY 2023.**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Ordinary meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2023 and the Annual Meeting held on 17 May 2023 be approved and adopted.

2. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Pett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 (Establishing a Local Housing Company – Report CL168 refers) as he

was a non-executive director of Venta Living, and he left the chamber during the meeting's consideration of the item.

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

The Mayor announced her forthcoming charity events and then reminded the council of the forthcoming Law Sunday Cathedral Services and Reception.

The Mayor then reported that former councillor Ernest Nunn, who had represented the St Luke's ward between 2002 and 2008 had recently passed away. Council stood in silent tribute to his memory.

The Leader made announcements in three main areas.

He firstly advised that discussions regarding Hampshire County Council's 'county deal' were no longer progressing. The Solent unitary councils (Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight) had indicated that they were not interested in a partnership on that basis and negotiations therefore had stopped as Government wished to pursue a whole county deal.

The Leader then referred to proposals to absorb functions of the two Hampshire Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) into upper tier councils. Future arrangements for business and district council representation were unclear. As he was on both the board and the joint Leader's board of the Enterprise M3 LEP, he would continue to advocate the important role of district councils in the development of business in the region.

The Leader then reported that he had been briefed by the Chief Constable and Police & Crime Commissioner about the new, more localised structure for policing in the county. Policing functions that were previously organised on a countywide basis were now to be structured on a more local level and he had opportunity to receive clarification on how matters reported by residents whose closest police station was in another district – particularly citing residents from Waterlooville. Chief Inspector Korine Bishop had been recently appointed as Winchester District Commander having previously been responsible for rural crime across Hampshire and he had discussed with her some of the issues in the city and district.

The Leader then referred to nutrient neutrality and the recent House of Lords decision not to accept an amendment with respect to planning application decision process. He confirmed that the council would continue to work through the Partnership for South Hampshire (PfSH) regarding the issue and with other stakeholders and groups. He had also recently met with Steve Brine MP. The council was committed to improving the quality of water in our waterways and also recognised the need for new housing, especially affordable housing. He referred to discussions at the Business & Housing Policy Committee about upgrading the council's wastewater treatment plants to reduce phosphates and nitrates in wastewater and these proposals would also generate more nutrient credits for other council developments.

The Chief Executive then announced apologies for the meeting.

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

Two written questions had been received from members of the public who attended the meeting to present their questions. Supplementary questions were also asked. The questions received and their response were subsequently set out on the [council's website](#).

5. **ESTABLISHING A LOCAL HOUSING COMPANY (LESS EXEMPT APPENDICES) (CL168)**

Councillor Westwood (Cabinet Member for Housing) moved that the recommendations in report CL168 be approved and adopted (seconded by Councillor Cutler, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance).

Council proceeded to ask questions and debate the matters in the report and its appendices.

The meeting then moved to exempt session to discuss the contents of the exempt appendices before returning to open session to then consider the recommendations for council as set out below.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft financial business plan at exempt Appendix C to Report CL168, as recommended by Cabinet Committee: Housing, be approved.
2. That council agree to reduce the share capital of Venta Living Ltd from £300,000 to £150,000.
3. That the appointment of Fiander Tovell Ltd as external auditors to Venta Living Ltd as recommended by Cabinet Committee: Housing, be approved.

6. **TO CONSIDER AND DETERMINE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDED MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD 3 JULY 2023 - ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2022/23 (SC089)**

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

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

RESOLVED:

That Council note the annual scrutiny report for 2022/23.

7. **NOTICES OF MOTION**

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

(i) Motion submitted by Councillor Kelsie Learney (Cabinet Member for the Climate Emergency) – Nature Emergency

The first motion had been submitted by Councillor Learney and was as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Lee. The motion was introduced.

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

- Declaring a nature emergency would positively contribute to tackling the climate crisis and delivery of the council's carbon neutrality action plan. Nature and the climate emergency are inextricably linked and interdependent.
- Having regard to the nature emergency, the council should consider aspects of its procurement, contractual arrangements and services.
- Agreeing the motion may assist the council with its response to a future parliamentary bill regarding climate and ecology.
- The 'People's Plans for Nature' was a collaboration with the public to protect and restore nature and was relevant to the nature emergency.
- The council should be pragmatic and proportionate in its response to the nature emergency and must continue to provide opportunity to scrutinise, challenge and discuss new potential policy.
- Regarding resolution 7 of the motion, in addition to watercourses, the council must also play its part in protecting our oceans.
- The council was undertaking considerable work in this area already.
- The council should be looking to reverse, rather than reduce the decline in the natural environment.
- There was concern that the government had recently reduced some of its previous commitments regarding environmental matters.
- The council should communicate with its MPs and neighbouring authorities to share its aims regarding tackling the nature emergency.
- The motion and its policy line was in line with the first purpose of the South Downs National Park (SDNP) which was to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area. The council's appointed member representative on the SDNP (Councillor Pett) advised that he would ensure that the greatest synergy was exploited between the council and the SDNP in work to mitigate the nature emergency.
- Humans need 'green lungs' and biodiversity to support an expanding population.
- The motion required strong and bold leadership from the council to help deal with the challenges to reverse the decline in biodiversity.
- Improving doorstep access to nature was important as was making improvements to nature for future generations.
- The motion was about promoting a healthy, natural environment for people to live in. There was a human emergency behind both the climate and nature emergencies.

- The consequences of not seeking to improve the current situation regarding the natural environment would impact across Hampshire and further afield and was not a local issue.

Following the proposer of the motion (Councillor Learney) exercising her right to respond to the debate, council then voted on the motion as set out on the agenda. Councillor Learney confirmed that the Leader would write to local MPs and other relevant stakeholders about what this council would be doing in response to the nature emergency.

RESOLVED:

This council resolves to:

1. Declare that we are experiencing a nature emergency recognising that
 - a. Nature is in long term decline and urgent action must be taken to reverse this.
 - b. A thriving natural environment underpins a healthy, prosperous society.
 - c. 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. Consider the impact on nature's recovery in all strategic plans, policy areas and decision-making processes.
3. Make nature based solutions part of our plans to tackle the climate emergency, taking forward, where appropriate and cost effective, the identified Nature intervention opportunities from the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan Roadmap
4. Review the Council's biodiversity action plan for opportunities for further enhancement, and report on the progress made.
5. Encourage and support, when we can, local wildlife agencies to recover our nature and natural environments including areas for habitat restoration widely across the district.
6. Support Hampshire County Council in the creation and implementation of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
7. Play our part in improving the quality of our local rivers and streams and campaign for faster Government and water company action to reduce sewage and nutrient pollution in our watercourses.
8. Improve doorstep access to nature, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
9. Work with local communities, organisations and businesses to help them make decisions and take action which support nature's recovery.

(ii) **Motion submitted by Councillor Malcolm Wallace – Nutrient Neutrality**

The second motion had been submitted by Councillor Wallace and was as set out on the agenda and was seconded by Councillor Lee.

The motion was introduced and with the leave of the seconder of the motion, Councillor Wallace advised that as the House of Lords had agreed not to accept an amendment with respect to planning application decision process, the motion as set out was no longer required at this time and was therefore withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion as set out on the agenda proposed by Councillor Malcolm Wallace regarding Nutrient Neutrality, be withdrawn.

8. **CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

RESOLVED:

For the Business & Housing Policy Committee, Councillor Scott to be replaced by Councillor Power.

9. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**

15 written questions had been received of which 10 were heard at the meeting along with associated supplementary questions. All questions are set out on in full on the [council's website](#), together with responses from the relevant Cabinet Member.

10. **EXEMPT BUSINESS: TO CONSIDER WHETHER IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CASE THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE EXEMPTION OUTWEIGHS THE PUBLIC INTEREST IN DISCLOSING THE INFORMATION.**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
5	Establishing a Local Housing Company) Information relating to the) financial or business affairs of

(exempt appendices)) any particular person (including
) the authority holding that
) information). (Para 3 Schedule
) 12A refers)

11. **ESTABLISHING A LOCAL HOUSING COMPANY (EXEMPT APPENDICES)**
(CL168)

Councillor Westwood provided further clarification regarding the potential risk and impact of the VAT treatment on expenditure and that the council's Section 151 Officer was satisfied that risk was minimal due to the relatively low levels of expenditure involved.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.20 pm

The Mayor