

# Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE

# Council

HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JULY 2020 AT 6.00 PM

AS A VIRTUAL MEETING

## Present:

David Bretherton (Chairman)  
Ken Arlett, Anna Badcock, Pieter-Paul Barker, David Bartholomew, Robin Bennett, Sam Casey-Rerhaye, Sue Cooper, Peter Dragonetti, Maggie Filipova-Rivers, Stefan Gawrysiak, Elizabeth Gillespie, Sarah Gray, Kate Gregory, Victoria Haval, Simon Hewerdine, Lorraine Hillier, Kellie Hinton, Alexandrine Kantor, Mocky Khan, George Levy, Lynn Lloyd, Axel Macdonald, Jane Murphy, Caroline Newton, Andrea Powell, Leigh Rawlins, Jo Robb, Sue Roberts, David Rouane, Anne-Marie Simpson, Ian Snowdon, Alan Thompson, David Turner, Ian White and Celia Wilson

## Apologies for absence:

None.

**Officers:** Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

Council observed a minute's silence in memory of the following former district councillors who had died since the last meeting of Council:

Vernon Butt  
Patrick Greene, a former Chairman of the council  
Colin Daukes, a former Chairman of the council  
Betty Atkins

## 81 Minutes

**RESOLVED:** to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 13 and 20 February 2020 as correct records and agree that the Chairman sign them as such.

## 82 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

## 83 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

The Chairman advised councillors of general procedures to be followed in virtual meetings.

## 84 Chief Executive's update



Listening Learning Leading

Mark Stone, Chief Executive, addressed Council. His address is available on the council's [website](#)

## **85 Public participation**

Mr Toby Newman, a Wheatley resident and Wheatley Parish Councillor, submitted the following question to Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council:

“There are messages being posted on social media locally, which suggest that GLL is unable to meet their management fee payments. GLL is also publicly calling on its local authority partners to “do the right thing” and to support the top-up of the wages of furloughed staff in the leisure centres and libraries it operates in partnership with them.

Since leisure centres, pools, gyms and libraries were closed by Government order on the 20th of March, GLL has furloughed over 10,000 permanent and casual staff under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which ensures they will get 80% of their salaries paid.

As a charitable social enterprise operation - and with no money coming through its tills - GLL cannot afford to pay the top-up to 100% of pay, even for the lowest paid staff. Accordingly, the operator is asking its local authority partners to step up to the plate and make good all pay packets up to 100%, ensuring the sustainability of the company and its important ongoing contribution to public health and wellbeing when it can fully open again. Crucially, the pay arrangements would ensure GLL employees, most of whom live locally, have their earnings protected through the crisis.

Can the leader please explain the current situation and budget impact regarding management fees due from GLL for the management of the district's leisure centres and whether the council will be supporting the wages of GLL employees? In addition is there any plan for the council to work with GLL on a phased recovery period, with a focus on opening as many of the leisure sites as soon as possible once restrictions are lifted”?

Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council, responded as below:

“Since April 2020, South Oxfordshire District Council has been in discussions with GLL about the financial impact of lockdown measures in relation to the district's leisure facilities. These discussions are ongoing. A report about the impact of Covid-19 on the council's leisure facilities will be presented to Council for a decision once these discussions have concluded. Officers continue to work closely with Sport England and GLL to develop a viable phased reopening plan. The plan will be confirmed once the council is confident that the government guidance to ensure safety and social distancing requirements can be met”.

## **86 Petitions**

None.

## **87 Progress on approved Council motions**

Council received and noted a progress report on motions approved by Council since May 2019.

Council welcomed the report. The view was expressed that motions should focus on areas within the remit of the council and achievable impacts. A number of letters had been sent to government ministers with no response.

## **88 Virtual meeting procedure rules and scheme of delegation**

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on proposed changes to the council's virtual meeting procedure rules to allow public participation to resume and clarification of the scheme of delegation to the head of planning.

Councillor Sue Cooper moved, and Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson seconded the following the motion:

That Council:

1. adopts the revised Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules attached at appendix one to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 16 July 2020 which provide for public participation at virtual formal council meetings, to apply from the date of this meeting;
2. agrees corrected wording for the head of planning's delegation 1.1 a ii in the council's constitution to clarify call-in of planning applications by ward councillors as set out in appendix two to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 16 July, to apply from the date of this meeting until a review by full council of their operation, to be undertaken no later than the end of October 2020;
3. notes the intention to resume Planning Committee site visits but authorises the head of planning, in consultation with the chair of the Planning Committee, to suspend them if at any time it becomes unsafe to do so;
4. authorises the head of legal and democratic to make the necessary changes to the constitution and to make any minor or consequential amendments to the constitution and the rules for consistency and to reflect the council's style guide.
5. agrees that a further report on the operation of call-in procedures relating to planning matters will be brought to Council no later than the end of October 2020, with the aim of introducing a revised long term scheme of delegation regarding call in at that time, or as soon as possible thereafter.

Councillor Ken Arlett moved and Councillor Stefan Gawrysiak seconded an amendment as set out below:

1. As motion.
2. That to apply from the date of this meeting the wording of delegation 1.1 a ii should read "A ward councillor (to include adjacent ward councillor whose parish has been consulted) calls in the application to be considered by the Planning Committee within 28 days of the date of registration of the application (unless an extension to the consultation period has been granted.) This request must be in writing and refer to material planning matters to ensure the audit trail for making that decision is clear and unambiguous. Councillors' right of call-in does not apply to applications for certificates of lawful use or development, prior approvals and notifications".

3. As motion.
4. As motion.
5. Deleted.

Those councillors in support of the amendment expressed the view that locally elected councillors should, having knowledge of the local issues and views, have the power to refer planning applications to the Planning Committee for consideration. This power should not reside with officers. Other councillors expressed the view that the delegation to the head of planning would ensure that valid planning reasons are provided for the call-in of planning applications to the Planning Committee.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the chair called for a recorded vote on the amendment which was declared lost with the voting as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Ken Arlett	Pieter-Paul Barker	David Bretherton
Anna Badcock	Robin Bennett	David Turner
David Bartholomew	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	
Stefan Gawrysiak	Sue Cooper	
Lorraine Hillier	Peter Dragonetti	
Kellie Hinton	Maggie Filipova-Rivers	
Mocky Khan	Elizabeth Gillespie	
Lynn Lloyd	Sarah Gray	
Axel Macdonald	Kate Gregory	
Caroline Newton	Victoria Haval	
Ian Snowdon	Simon Hewerdine	
Alan Thompson	Alexandrine Kantor	
Ian White	George Levy	
Celia Wilson	Andrea Powell	
	Leigh Rawlins	

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
	Jo Robb	
	Sue Roberts	
	David Rouane	
	Anne-Marie Simpson	
<b>14</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>

A number of councillors noted that a review of the call-in procedures would be brought to Council by the end of October 2020 and welcomed the ability to resume public participation in meetings.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the chair called for a recorded vote on the original motion which was declared carried with the voting as follows:

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Pieter-Paul Barker	Ken Arlett	Kellie Hinton
Robin Bennett	David Bartholomew	
David Bretherton	Stefan Gawrysiak	
Sam Casey-Rerhaye	Lorraine Hillier	
Sue Cooper	Mocky Khan	
Peter Dragonetti	Lynn Lloyd	
Maggie Filipova-Rivers	Axel Macdonald	
Elizabeth Gillespie	Caroline Newton	

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Sarah Gray	Ian Snowdon	
Kate Gregory	Alan Thompson	
Victoria Haval	Ian White	
Simon Hewerdine	Celia Wilson	
Alexandrine Kantor		
George Levy		
Andrea Powell		
Leigh Rawlins		
Jo Robb		
Sue Roberts		
David Rouane		
Anne-Marie Simpson		
David Turner		
<b>21</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>

**RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. adopts the revised Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules attached at appendix one to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 16 July 2020 which provide for public participation at virtual formal council meetings, to apply from the date of this meeting;
2. agrees corrected wording for the head of planning's delegation 1.1 a ii in the council's constitution to clarify call-in of planning applications by ward councillors as set out in appendix two to this report, to apply from the date of this meeting until a review by full council of their operation, to be undertaken no later than the end of October 2020;
3. notes the intention to resume Planning Committee site visits but authorises the head of planning, in consultation with the chair of the Planning Committee, to suspend them if at any time it becomes unsafe to do so;
4. authorises the head of legal and democratic to make the necessary changes to the constitution and to make any minor or consequential

amendments to the constitution and the rules for consistency and to reflect the council's style guide;

5. agrees that a further report on the operation of call-in procedures relating to planning matters will be brought to Council no later than the end of October 2020, with the aim of introducing a revised long term scheme of delegation regarding call in at that time, or as soon as possible thereafter.

## **89 Report of the leader of the council**

Councillor Sue Cooper, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).

## **90 Questions on notice**

### **A. Question from Councillor David Bartholomew to Cabinet Member for planning, Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson**

This Council must respond to Reading's Transport Consultation by the end of August. Three key elements that impact on South Oxfordshire are: 1) Third Thames Crossing; 2) North Reading Orbital (going through South Oxfordshire); 3) Three 'Park & Rides' to serve Reading but located in South Oxfordshire. The Cabinet's position on 1) is already agreed as a result of a Full Council decision last year, but what position is being taken with regard to items 2) and 3)?

#### **Written response**

The planning policy team is currently in the local plan examination hearings at which cross boundary work on transport with Reading is likely to form part of the discussion at the Matter 7 hearing session on 23 July. Officers will be seeking comments from all Councillors on Reading's Transport Strategy 2036 in tomorrow's councillor update. The Cabinet member for Planning will consider comments made and the council's position on such proposals and submit a response on behalf of the council by the end of August deadline. A copy of the response will be circulated, as usual, in the regular councillor update.

#### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question seeking clarification of her view, Councillor Simpson stated that she and the Cabinet would listen to the views expressed at the Local Plan Examination and the results of the councillor consultation, the deadline for which is 14 August, before responding to the Reading Transport Consultation.

### **B. Question from Councillor David Bartholomew to Cabinet Member for finance, Councillor Leigh Rawlins**

Now that we are moving out of lockdown, what is the timetable for recovering unspent funds from the Councillor COVID-19 Grant Scheme (March 2020)?

#### **Written response**

On 25 March 2020, we launched an Emergency Councillor Grant Scheme that gave each councillor £2,000 to award to community groups delivering community initiatives in their

ward to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, particularly those supporting vulnerable residents.

For audit purposes, we provided councillors with a spreadsheet for capturing and recording all the requests they receive and the awards they chose to make. Councillors will be aware that officers have recently requested updates on their individual emergency councillor grant budgets, and to offer their support in connecting them with groups that still need funding towards their work supporting vulnerable residents.

As we ease out of lockdown, and in anticipation of the national shielding programme coming to an end on 1 August 2020 and the potential for a second response spike or wave of positive cases, it is our intention to keep the scheme open until the end of September 2020. By then, we'll hopefully have more certainty nationally that we're in the recovery phase of the pandemic and officers can put a further call out for grant budget returns. It is at that point we're likely to recover any unspent funds if a second wave has not materialised and is considered unlikely.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Rawlins stated that a report into the funds spent as part of the scheme would be published when the resources allowed but there were higher priority risk projects for officers to address first.

#### **C. Question from Councillor Caroline Newton to the Cabinet Member for planning, Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson**

Given that the independent inspector's decision on the Local Plan 2034 is not anticipated much before the end of the year, could the Cabinet member for planning please clarify the timing of the stages of work towards a formal decision on Home England's application to develop Chalgrove Airfield, including the closing date for public consultation?

#### **Written response**

Due to the Local Plan 2034 Examination, the closing date for comments on the planning application will be extended to 1 September 2020. The target date for making a decision is currently 9 October 2020, however subject to the agreement of the applicant, this target decision date maybe extended. It is anticipated that officers will, when appropriate, seek an extension of time for a decision, recognising the timing of the Inspectors report on the Local Plan 2034 and that further transport information is required to fully assess the current submitted application.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question regarding the possible postponement of the consultation on the Chalgrove Airfield planning application during the Local Plan Examination and before local transport infrastructure issues had been addressed, Councillor Simpson advised that these issues should be addressed to the head of planning.

#### **D. Question from Councillor Caroline Newton to the Cabinet Member for housing and environment, Councillor David Rouane**

At what point during the budget-setting process did the proposal of increasing charges for dog bins arise, and what consideration was given to the disproportionate financial impact this might have on smaller, rural parish councils?

### **Written response**

As part of the budget setting process and in accordance with good financial management officers were asked to identify any revenue reductions and income generation ideas to address the council's current financial position. The prices have been increased to provide full cost recovery for this service to those council that use the service. The town and parish councils are under no obligation to use our service and can arrange for their bins to be emptied themselves. The increase in cost does not have a "disproportionate financial impact" on rural parish councils as the final cost relates to the number of bins in place. We have taken a stepped approach to the price increase in order to give towns and parishes time to assess whether or not they wish to use an alternative provider.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Rouane undertook to ensure that proposed increases in fees that impact on parish councils are agreed in advance of the precept setting process.

#### **E. Question from Councillor Mocky Khan to the Leader of the council, Councillor Sue Cooper**

The ruling group and the Leader have spoken many times that the council should be inclusive, decisions made collective and information shared. Can the Leader explain why despite numerous requests, Group Leaders have not been permitted to attend Cabinet Briefings? What are the reasons for the exclusions?

### **Written response**

Firstly I would say that both I and fellow Cabinet members have enabled an increased number of all-councillor briefings on key issues such as the Local Plan, other planning issues, the growth deal and our new offices as we recognise the importance of all councillors being briefed on important issues affecting the council. The purpose of Cabinet briefing meetings is to confidentially brief Cabinet members collectively on issues that will be coming forward to the Cabinet and Cabinet members for decision to enable them to ask questions and request information to be included in reports when they come forward in public, recognising that all reports must reflect the professional advice and opinion of our officers. These forthcoming decisions are advertised on the Cabinet's work programme and where appropriate (e.g. developing policies) are brought to the Scrutiny Committee before consideration by the Cabinet or to full Council where the constitution requires it. In addition, I am aware that the chief executive meets regularly with all group leaders which provides them with an opportunity to be briefed on current and emerging issues and that information and updates are sent directly to relevant members by officers wherever required.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Cooper reiterated that Cabinet Briefing meetings were not decision making and therefore it would not be appropriate to share the information considered at these meetings.

#### **F. Question from Councillor Mocky Khan to the Cabinet Member for housing and environment, Councillor David Rouane**

This council passed a motion regards Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) in July 2018. What progress has been made since? In addition, when is the feasibility study that was due for

publication in January going to be released and what reassurance can be given to inform residents that CPE is high on the agenda?

### **Written response**

No one can doubt the commitment of this administration to implementing CPE. It is included in our draft Corporate Plan and I have personally attended several meetings with town and parish councillors to discuss the matter and update them on progress. It is however a complicated project requiring many hours of officer time and involves many partners.

Discussions regarding CPE have been ongoing, and a working group of Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and Cherwell District Councils agreed to jointly investigate the feasibility of implementing CPE within each District. The feasibility study has been commissioned and undertaken by RTA Associates who are experienced in Civil Parking Enforcement. OCC officers are currently seeking feedback from Department of Transport prior to the preparation of any detailed programme for the introduction of CPE. OCC and each of the Districts will then need to seek Cabinet approval for the application to be made based on the recommendations of the final report. We are aiming to seek all of the relevant approvals by October 2020.

Assuming the proposal is approved by all authorities CPE could be brought into effect by November 2021.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Rouane stated that the findings of the joint study would be published when the agreement of all the partners to do so had been received.

### **G. Question from Councillor Mocky Khan to the Cabinet Member for Didcot Garden Town, Councillor David Rouane**

On 25 June, I read about the Didcot Gateway Project being withdrawn/amended in the Oxford Mail. Can the Cabinet member explain why South Oxfordshire District Councillors, Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board or the Didcot Town Council were not informed and had to read the article to find out? Also, what reassurance can the Cabinet member give to ensure key stakeholders will be consulted before future decisions are made in regard to Didcot Garden Town?

### **Written response**

Having reviewed the article since receiving this question, it does not appear to include anything significant that was not already in the public domain. It states that a planning application had been withdrawn and that Homes England was expected to submit a new one.

Whilst the district council Planning Committee made a resolution to grant the 2015 application by South Oxfordshire District Council, the legal agreement did not progress at that time as it involved a range of third-party landowners across a wider site area. Most of the site is now owned by Homes England and is designated within the emerging Local Plan as the location for 300 new homes and so it is reasonable to assume that a new plan would be forthcoming from them.

The one new item in the article was that the 2015 planning application had been withdrawn. This application was withdrawn as part of an internal housekeeping matter, given it had become out of date in terms of policy, design guidance, viability and

deliverability. This was undertaken in advance of a new application that we understand will shortly be submitted by Homes England.

Over the last couple of years council officers have worked closely with Homes England to support the development of a new viable masterplan that aligns with the Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan. Homes England has now started their public engagement on their new outline application, and they have notified the key stakeholders. Unfortunately, their planning consultants sent an email to ward councillors around the Didcot Garden Town area prior to the public engagement starting, without our knowledge, and before we had formally signed off any proposals or seen any finalised communications. As a result, and given the important nature of the site, officers have arranged a briefing for all district councillors on 17 July, where Homes England will talk through their application in more detail.

The Didcot Garden Town Team remains committed to transparency and consultation through the recently re-formed Advisory Board and the new Sounding Boards and we are disappointed that the new application was handled in the way that it was.

### **Supplementary question**

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Rouane stated that key stakeholders would be kept informed of developments but reiterated that the council had no control over third parties.

## **91 Motions on notice**

**Motion A: Councillor David Bartholomew moved, and Councillor Jane Murphy seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.**

“Currently, two individual councillors not members of a recognised party can declare themselves to be a Political Group, with one being the Leader and the other Deputy Leader. This confers a number of advantages on these councillors, including the right to attend Political Group Leader meetings and receive Political Group Leader briefings. These councillors are thus put in a position of advantage over other councillors without a genuine mandate from a real political group.

This Council asks that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State requesting that the relevant legislation is amended to state that a Political Group should constitute a minimum of three councillors unless the two councillors are part of a nationally recognised party such as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat or Green”.

The majority of councillors did not support the motion. They supported the view that the current regulations provide for small groups of councillors to form a political group, be allocated seats on committees and sub-committees to represent their electorate and gain information in the same way as larger groups.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 67, which provides for a recorded vote if three members request one, the chair called for a recorded vote on the motion which was declared lost with the voting as follows:

<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Ken Arlett	Pieter-Paul Barker	

David Bartholomew	Robin Bennett	
Lorraine Hillier	David Bretherton	
Lynn Lloyd	Sam Casey-Rerhaye	
Caroline Newton	Sue Cooper	
Ian Snowdon	Peter Dragonetti	
Alan Thompson	Maggie Filipova-Rivers	
Ian White	Stefan Gawrysiak	
	Elizabeth Gillespie	
	Sarah Gray	
	Kate Gregory	
	Victoria Haval	
	Simon Hewerdine	
	Kellie Hinton	
	Alexandrine Kantor	
	Mocky Khan	
	George Levy	
	Axel Macdonald	
	Andrea Powell	
	Leigh Rawlins	
	Jo Robb	
	Sue Roberts	
	David Rouane	
	Anne-Marie Simpson	
	David Turner	
	Celia Wilson	

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Prior to consideration of Motion B, Council agreed, prior to the expiry of two and a half hours, in accordance with council procedure rule 12, to extend the duration of the meeting by half an hour.

**Motion B: In the absence of Councillor Jane Murphy, Councillor Lynn Lloyd moved, and Councillor Ian White seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.**

**Amendment**

Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers moved, and Councillor Simon Hewardine seconded the following amendment with deleted words shown by a strikethrough.

**“Council notes that since early March the Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our communities. Loved ones have lost their lives and many have been seriously ill; some are still fighting the virus as patients or as clinical staff.**

**Council recognises the huge effort of our officers during the period. Adjusting to working remotely, volunteering to go beyond the day job to help support shielded people and those isolating and working long hours to keep vital council services running. Council also recognises that the Towns and Parishes and the community groups and their members and members of the public responded enthusiastically and rapidly to the challenges that we all faced and continue to face.**

~~Council thanks our residents for their commitment and support. This includes the members of our councils and their staff, the First Responders, the organisers and members of the Good Neighbours’ Schemes and Street Volunteers and similar organisations, the people who volunteer or knit or sew and give their time and also those who ‘do nothing!’ We know that they do nothing because they tell us; how often, when thanked, have you heard people say ‘oh, it was nothing!’ And we must not forget those who, just by being there, to listen, or step in in an emergency, help to reduce the stress and worry.~~

Council thanks everyone for the heroic part they have played, and will continue to play, helping residents in need of support through this dangerous and uncertain time.”

Those councillors supporting the amendment expressed the view that in listing certain groups there is a danger that the motion would not be inclusive by omitting reference to the business community, residents’ associations and certain key workers. Whilst it was important to say thank you.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

On being put to the vote the motion as amended was declared carried.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council notes that since early March the Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our communities. Loved ones have lost their lives and many have been seriously ill; some are still fighting the virus as patients or as clinical staff.

Council recognises the huge effort of our officers during the period. Adjusting to working remotely, volunteering to go beyond the day job to help support shielded people and those isolating and working long hours to keep vital council services running. Council also recognises that the Towns and Parishes and the community groups and their members and members of the public responded enthusiastically and rapidly to the challenges that we all faced and continue to face.

Council thanks everyone for the heroic part they have played, and will continue to play, helping residents in need of support through this uncertain time.

Prior to consideration of Motion C, and prior to the expiry of three hours, Council agreed, in accordance with council procedure rule 82, to suspend council procedure rule 12, which restricts the duration of a meeting, to allow Council to complete the business.

**Motion C: In the absence of Councillor Jane Murphy, Councillor Caroline Newton moved, and Councillor Ian Snowdon seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 12.**

#### **Amendment**

Councillor Celia Wilson moved, and Councillor Axel Macdonald seconded the following amendment with deleted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words shown in bold.

“Council recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown both the national and local economy into a state of turmoil and crisis. The impact on our local businesses and our local communities will only grow in the coming months and requires an immediate response.

This Council will urgently set up a new committee called the Local Economy Resilience Advisory Committee, to guide this council’s response to this crisis. Following the model of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, this new committee will be advisory to the Cabinet and should be made up of 12 members in total based on political balance (the head of legal and democratic to make appointments to the committee seats and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader). The term of reference for the new committee should be drawn up by the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet member for development and regeneration and group leaders. It will operate alongside ~~and have equal weight to~~ the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee **suggesting climate-friendly activities**, ~~to ensure this council works cross party and does everything it can to help local business, the high streets of our market towns and villages, and our communities survive this economic shock.~~

**It is true that the economy is suffering and is in shock, however the economic effects of the climate emergency are likely to be greater and irreversible. "Business as used to be usual" is not an option. In the new “normal”, Council should do all it can to encourage businesses to make sustainable, greener choices to support their economic recovery and beyond”.**

With the consent of Council, the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amended wording.

Councillors supported the need to address the economic prosperity of the district especially at this time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the majority of councillors did not support the establishment of a committee which it was considered would detract officers in the economic development team from the excellent work they are already undertaking to support local businesses at this time and could actually slow down this work. Any additional resources should be deployed to engage with groups across the county to support the economic recovery. There could also be a role for the Scrutiny Committee and a role for the existing Climate Emergency Advisory Committee.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared lost.

**Motion D: With the consent of Council, Councillor Ian White moved and, in the absence of Councillor Jane Murphy, Councillor Caroline Newton seconded the following motion which omitted reference to the ward councillor call-in issue which had been dealt with at agenda item 9 (words shown by a strikethrough).**

Changes to the Council's Constitution have been made by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, as documented in the CEO's Decision Notice of the 18 May 2020.

These include the removal of the automatic referral of planning applications to the Planning Committee where Parish or Town Councils views are at odds with officer recommendations. This is an unnecessary removal of transparency, an affront to the natural democratic process, is disproportionate and inappropriate.

~~Additionally, a requirement has been introduced that where a Ward Councillor refers an application to the Planning Committee it has to be subject to the agreement of two other Councillors, being the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee. This effectively creates a 'right of Veto' over a fellow Councillor, thus establishing an arbitrary two-tier system of Councillors where one Councillor effectively holds power over another, with no mechanism for appeal. Again, this is undemocratic and inappropriate.~~

~~For these reasons, this Council instructs that the changes referred to should be rescinded immediately, thereby restoring democratic control.~~

Council therefore agrees to reinstate the automatic referral of such planning applications to the Planning Committee.

## **Amendment**

Councillor Anne-Marie Simpson moved, and Councillor Leigh Rawlins seconded the following amendment with deleted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words shown in bold.

~~"Changes to the Council's Constitution have been made by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) under Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020, as documented in the CEO's Decision Notice of the 18 May 2020.~~ **under his emergency powers within the council's constitution, which permit him to take any action considered necessary in an emergency in consultation with Group Leaders. The views of all group leaders were sought by Democratic Services on 15 May 2020 and occurred after the views of the Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning had been informally sought.**

These **changes** include the **temporary** removal of the automatic referral to the **Planning Committee** of **minor** planning applications (**eg 1-9 new houses**) where the officer's recommendation for approval/consent is in direct conflict with the clear and

**unambiguous views of the parish/town council or parish meeting. However, for all major applications (e.g. 10 houses plus) there has been no change and if there is a Town or Parish Council objection on an application where the officer recommends approval the application continues to go to the planning committee.** ~~to the Planning Committee where Parish or Town Councils views are at odds with officer recommendations. This is an unnecessary removal of transparency, an affront to the natural democratic process, is disproportionate and inappropriate.~~

~~Council therefore agrees to reinstate the automatic referral of such planning applications to the Planning Committee.~~

**Council notes that these changes were intended to be reviewed after six months, as they were made in recognition of the additional work pressures on officers due to COVID19 and following an unsuccessful request to the Secretary of State for a temporary relaxation of statutory targets and the 5 year land supply requirement to avoid a return to speculative development across the district.**

**Council confirms that it supports the approach whereby this change is reviewed, as was expressly committed to in the Chief Executive's decision and asks that the views of all Town and Parish Councils are actively sought as part of this review. Council further confirms that it wishes the recommendations from this review to be brought before Council in October 2020".**

During the debate on the amendment, Councillor Simon Hewardine moved and Councillor Sue Roberts seconded a motion without notice under paragraph 41(k) of the council procedure rules to adjourn the debate on this item until the next scheduled Council meeting in October. On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Prior to consideration of the following motions, Councillor Bretherton moved and Councillor Gawrysiak seconded a motion without notice under paragraph 41(l) of the council procedure rules to adjourn the meeting with motions E and F on the agenda to be included on the agenda for the next scheduled Council meeting in October. The motion was carried.

The meeting closed at 9:45pm

Chairman

Date