

Dorset County Council

Minutes of a meeting held at County Hall,
Colliton Park, Dorchester on 12 February 2015.

Present:

John Wilson (Chairman)
Andrew Cattaway (Vice-Chairman)

Pauline Batstone, Michael Bevan, Richard Biggs, Dan Brember, Steve Butler, Mike Byatt, Ronald Coatsworth, Robin Cook, Toni Coombs, Barrie Cooper, Hilary Cox, Deborah Croney, Lesley Dedman, Janet Dover, Fred Drane, Beryl Ezzard, Peter Finney, Spencer Flower, Ian Gardner, Robert Gould, Peter Hall, David Harris, Jill Haynes, Colin Jamieson, Susan Jefferies, David Jones, Trevor Jones, Ros Kayes, Paul Kimber, Rebecca Knox, Mike Lovell, David Mannings, Margaret Phipps, Ian Smith, Mark Tewkesbury, Daryl Turner, David Walsh, Peter Wharf and Kate Wheller.

Officers attending:

Debbie Ward (Chief Executive), Nicky Cleave (Assistant Director of Public Health), Catherine Driscoll (Director for Adult and Community Services), Patrick Ellis (Assistant Chief Executive), Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy), Jonathan Mair (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Peter Moore (Head of Environment), Sara Tough (Director for Children's Services), Lee Gallagher (Democratic Services Manager), Rebecca Guest (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and David Northover (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the County Council to be held on **23 April 2015**.)

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies for absence were received from Andy Canning, Mervyn Jeffery, Peter Richardson and William Trite. Peter Moore (Head of Environment) attended part of the meeting for Mike Harries (Director for Environment and the Economy).

Code of Conduct

2. There were no declarations by members of any disclosable pecuniary interests under the Code of Conduct.

Minutes

3. The minutes of the meetings held on 13 November 2014 and 3 December 2014 were confirmed and signed.

Matters Arising

Minute 73.7 – Better Care Fund Re-Submission

4. It was confirmed that a seminar on Health and Wellbeing would be held on 12 June 2015.

Public Participation

Public Speaking

5.1 There were no public questions received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(1).

5.2 There were no public statements received at the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 21(2).

Petitions

5.3 There were no petitions received in accordance with the County Council's petition scheme at this meeting.

Chairman's Announcements

6.1 The Chairman reported on the following deaths of former members of the County Council:

- (a) Mr Gordon Hine on 14 December 2014, who served on the County Council from 1985 until 1993, and from 2001 until 2005 representing the Shaftesbury electoral division.
- (b) Major Edward (Ted) Rushton MC on 30 December 2014, who served on the County Council between 1973 and 1977, representing the Bournemouth (Southbourne) electoral division.

6.2 The death of the Margaret Holmes on 14 January 2015, the first County Archivist of Dorset, was also reported.

6.3 Members paid tribute to the dedication and commitment of the former members to Dorset and within their electoral divisions, and to the former member of staff. The County Council then stood in silent tribute.

6.4 The Chairman reported the following events since the last meeting:

- (i) HRH the Prince of Wales Royal Visit to The Prince of Wales School The Chairman reported that his Royal Highness returned to mark the 20th anniversary of the opening of The Prince of Wales School on 17 November 2014.
- (ii) High Sheriff's Legal Service The Chairman announced that Mrs Jane Stitchbury, the current High Sheriff, arranged her legal service in St Peters Church, Dorchester on 23 November 2014.
- (iii) Gordon Beningfield Dorset Farm Appeal The Chairman reported that the Countryside Restoration Trust launched the Gordon Beningfield Dorset Appeal at the Dorset County Museum on 8 January 2015. The appeal's objective was to purchase land that had been intensively farmed in order to restore it to wildlife rich countryside.
- (iv) New Assistant Chief Executive The Chairman welcomed Patrick Ellis, the new Assistant Chief Executive, to his first meeting of the Council and wished him every success.
- (v) Other Events The Chairman also reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended Gordon Hine's funeral, several Christmas charity events, Christmas carol services, student award presentations at QE school, and a tour of the offices here in County Hall to offer seasonal good wishes to the staff.

Leader's Announcements

7.1 The Leader of the Council reported on the following issues facing the Council, and invited questions from all members:

Cabinet

7.2 The Leader reported the recent changes to the Cabinet portfolios, which had been revised and updated to clearly show the priorities of the Council. He made particular reference to the creation of the portfolio for Corporate Development held by Cllr Robin Cook.

7.3 He then confirmed that the seating arrangements for Council had been changed to reflect a member led authority, and that investigation of the use of technology to enhance future committee meetings would be undertaken in relation to microphones and webcasting to make meetings more open and transparent, but this would be linked with a comprehensive communications and engagement strategy.

Dorset Waste Partnership

7.4 The Leader of the Council expressed enormous concern in relation to the Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP). He highlighted that it had been a great achievement to establish the partnership between all Dorset Councils, which had led to a considerable improvement in recycling across the County. There were now significant concerns in respect of the future of the DWP, the financial position, and recent service delivery in Weymouth and Portland. The Leader confirmed that every effort was being made to address the issues and recover the position in the shortest possible timescale. The Council was informed that three reports in relation to partnership support, budget systems control, and governance would be considered by the Management Board of the Partnership shortly and would be reported to the DWP Joint Committee in March 2015.

7.5 Members shared concerns in relation to the experience of Weymouth and Portland and the problems with the rollout of the new service, although this had been successful in other areas of the County. Requests were made for wide communication about the next steps in terms of service delivery and the general financial position in order to alleviate concerns of the public. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the issues raised would be addressed in the reports mentioned above and would form the foundation of a communications plan.

7.6 Of particular concern were the governance and scrutiny of the DWP. The Leader of the Council acknowledged the need for scrutiny arrangements on a pan-Dorset basis, and that this would be included in the recovery plan to ensure that the Council was not in this position again.

7.7 In relation to the quality of service delivered across Dorset, there was a growing concern about the level of waste on highways and the need to increase road sweeping to make Dorset welcoming and attractive, especially to visitors and tourists. It was noted that collection and street cleaning was within the operational role of the Joint Committee and that particular issues needed to be reported to the DWP directly.

7.8 In addition to the issues raised, a further plea was made in respect of the use of technology as the market developed, with reference being made to recycle disposal through waste to energy methods such as autoclave technology. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Joint Committee would welcome and consider all new technologies.

7.9 The Leader of the Council highlighted that there was a need to ensure that the current issues did not overshadow the real impact of the wider partnership which had brought together significant savings and benefits to Dorset.

Growth Deal - Local Enterprise Partnership

7.10 The Leader of the Council reported the significant funding of £12.6m received through the growth deal to tackle key projects to invest in Dorset's economy to drive income

generation and economic growth. It was also reported that a new cross-authority bid for further transformation funding through the Transformation Challenge Award had secured an additional 750k, subject to consultation, and members were encouraged to raise the profile of the funding with Parish and Town Councils.

7.11 Although the funding was in relation to economic growth, it was suggested that the reports presented to meetings should make a clear link with the broad economic agenda of the Council in line with the Corporate Plan to evidence growth, enterprise and development. The Leader acknowledged that economic growth was a key priority, which was reflected in the recent Cabinet changes in portfolios to ensure a coordinated and coherent approach throughout the organisation so that it was best placed to take advantage of areas such as possible devolution of powers from government, infrastructure and new income streams.

Highways Award – Considerate Constructors Scheme

7.12 The Leader announced that the Council's Highways Team had received a national Considerate Constructors Scheme award for the second year in a row. The Council congratulated the team and noted the steady improvement of highways maintenance.

Questions from Members of the Council

8.1 The following questions were asked under Standing Order 20:

- The County Councillor for Weymouth Town asked the Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing a question in relation to Olympic Legacy funding. A supplementary question was asked regarding the future strategic approach to tackle health inequalities. The Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing clarified that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be the strategic body responsible for health inequalities. The outcomes of its work would be assessed and be reported back to overview committees as required.
- The County Councillor for Corfe Mullen asked the Cabinet Member for Environment a question in relation to Road Gritting near Schools.
- The County Councillor for Bridport asked the Cabinet Member for Environment questions in relation to Ask Dorset Engagement and the Holistic Transport Review. A supplementary question was asked regarding the consideration of the redistribution of funding through a review of concessionary rates or exploration of inter-linkage of funding as in Devon and Somerset. The Cabinet Member for Environment indicated that he would not pre-empt the decision of the Holistic Transport Board, but did indicate that no matter what approach was taken, there would still be many difficult decisions to be taken.

8.2 The questions and answers are attached to these minutes as Annexure 1.

Reports of the Cabinet

9.1 The reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 19 November 2014, 17 December 2014, 14 January 2015 and 2 February 2015 were presented and their adoption duly moved and seconded.

9.2 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2014:

Asset Management Capital Priorities

9.3 In relation to recommendation 478, the Council agreed that the recommendation would be considered following the outcome of the debate on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2015/16 to 2017/18.

The Extension Programme for Superfast Broadband in Dorset

9.4 In relation to minute 498, a number of members raised concern in respect of the provision of Superfast Broadband (SFBB) in rural areas of Dorset that could not easily be connected to the new technology and infrastructure. It was noted that although the rollout of SFBB would positively impact on the majority of Dorset, some very rural areas would not be connected. This could severely disadvantage residents, local business and economic growth. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that some rural areas were not currently included in the planned rollout, but as much pressure as possible would be applied to increase coverage where possible. However, it was too early to say whether this would be successful. The Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth also highlighted the need to support rural areas to enable business to thrive. Officers were commended for their efforts to date.

9.5 A further concern was expressed about the coverage of the rollout of SFBB in a specific urban area, which the Cabinet Member undertook to investigate outside of the meeting.

9.6 One member asked a question about the process by which the contract was arranged in so far as the specific detail of those areas not covered not being revealed during the process, and the impact of new technologies on the future rollout. The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed the contract process and welcomed the use of new technology where possible, especially in difficult rural areas.

Formation of a Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) for Adult Provider Services

9.7 In relation to minute 481, a number of views were shared regarding the establishment of a Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) which included concern about the scrutiny of the matter in advance of the decision being taken by the Cabinet. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed the consideration by Section 151 officers of each partner Council and by the South West Audit Partnership before consideration by the Executive Advisory Panel on Pathways to Independence and Adult and Community Services Overview Committee, before the Cabinet made its decision.

9.8 In relation to accountability of the LATC it was clarified that the governance and scrutiny arrangements were still to be finalised by the Shadow Board, which included cross party membership, especially in relation to on-going member involvement. Concerns were acknowledged regarding the weight of feeling by some members that the County Council as a whole should be responsible for decision making instead of the Cabinet. Although concern was also expressed about the Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services serving on the Shadow Board, it was confirmed that this was a decision of the Leader of the Council. It was also confirmed that representation by the County Council would continue to be cross party.

Navitus Bay Wind Park - Update and Turbine Mitigation Option

9.9 In relation to minute 487, the consideration of the mitigation option for the Navitus Bay Wind Park was referred to in relation to the potential negative impact on the landscape and pollution of the seabed, whilst an alternative view was expressed regarding the opportunity that the Wind Park could bring in terms of the cost of power to residents including pensioners and to meet international commitments.

9.10 The Cabinet Member for Environment stated that it was important to consider the mitigation option and give due diligence, and as a result it was agreed that the Council would continue its opposition to the application. He then reported that the County Council was exploring alternative options in relation to the provision of energy to residents as a supplier in order to give the best deals possible, and consideration of other methods of renewable energy by looking at the County Farms Estate to explore solar panel options and other renewable energy methods. The Cabinet Member also congratulated officers on the tremendous amount of work needed to address the application.

Quarterly Asset Management Report

9.11 In relation to minute 475.2, a request was made for an update in respect of the delivery and services to be provided by the Weymouth Recovery Hub, to which the Director for Adult and Community Services informed members that the matter would be considered by the Property Management Group on 19 February 2015 and progress would be shared with members at that stage.

9.12 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015:

Contra-flow Cycleway Scheme – Westham Road, Weymouth

9.13 In relation to minute 17, the County Councillor for Weymouth Town, as a local member, asked about the timescale for the resubmission of an application to complete the Weymouth Contra-flow Cycleway, to which the Cabinet Member for Environment undertook to respond outside of the meeting.

Forward Together Update

9.14 In relation to minute 9.6, a question was asked in relation to the progress of a skills audit of all members. The Leader of the Council explained that the skills audit would be addressed through member review and development meetings to identify the wide range of skills and experiences that could be used to enhance member leadership.

9.15 The following matters were raised under the minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2015:

Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget 2015/16 to 2017/18

(Note: Members had been granted dispensations in order to take part and vote in relation to the budget and council tax setting items on the agenda following the elections held in 2013.)

9.16 The Chairman highlighted that the Council was required to take a recorded vote following discussion of the budget.

9.17 The Leader of the Council presented the budget for 2015/16 to 2017/18 (a copy of the Leader's speech is set out in Annexure 2 to these minutes). He proposed the recommendations put forward by the Cabinet. The proposals were seconded by the Deputy Leader.

9.18 The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group then addressed the meeting and highlighted that it was important to work closely with other Council's in Dorset, and partners, in terms of planning services for the future. She continued to highlight examples of concerns within the proposed budget, which included a £850k subsidy cut to buses in Dorset taking into account the magnificent success of the contract bus system in 2012 for the Olympics and urged the Council to revisit cuts to bus services as a matter of urgency, the cuts in Adult and Community Services and Children's Services which she felt should be ring-fenced to protect vulnerable people, the payment of compensation to schools as a result of the school

meals problems experienced in September 2014, and the current position in relation to the finances and quality of service provided by the Dorset Waste Partnership which was originally aimed at being a low cost and high performing . A further concern was expressed in detail regarding the impact on service users and staff of the establishment of a Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) and that the changes were happening with too much haste and not enough research into the pitfalls of such an arrangement which she felt was privatisation by the back door. She summarised by indicating that the Liberal Democrat Group would support a council tax increase of 1.99% to ensure people received services at an acceptable level, but that this did not mean that the Group agreed with the budget strategy.

9.19 The Leader of the Labour Group then addressed the meeting and confirmed that the priorities for the Group in the following year would be to address continued reduction of pockets of high deprivation and unemployment, the living wage for Dorset County Council employees, and health inequalities. He confirmed that the Labour Group would support the proposed budget to provide stability for the medium to long term future of the Council, but clarified that he regarded the budget as consisting of cuts rather than savings. In particular he welcomed an additional £2m for highways maintenance. He then asked, as a result of the peer challenge in 2013, to see clear evidence in the future of a member led approach by all with members which would include taking personal responsibility in terms of the decisions being made, not just by the Cabinet. The continuation of members' divisional budgets was seen as a very useful way to help communities. Finally, he paid tribute to Council staff that had seen so many changes over the past few years.

9.20 Members took the opportunity to ask questions regarding the budget setting process and particular items within the budget, and which Cabinet Members responded to each of the individual points raised. Issues discussed included the establishment of a Pan-Dorset LATC, economic growth, the continuation and review of Members' Divisional Budgets, funding of Trading Standards and Libraries, demands on children's social work, school meals, holistic transport, involvement by opposition groups in the budget setting process, health inequalities, and the pace of transformational change.

9.21 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 32.1(i) was recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Deborah Croney	Rebecca Knox
Michael Bevan	Peter Finney	Mike Lovell
Steve Butler	Spencer Flower	Margaret Phipps
Mike Byatt	Ian Gardner	Ian Smith
Andrew Cattaway	Robert Gould	Daryl Turner
Ronald Coatsworth	Jill Haynes	David Walsh
Robin Cook	Colin Jamieson	Peter Wharf
Toni Coombs	David Jones	Kate Wheller
Hilary Cox	Paul Kimber	John Wilson
Total: 27		

Against

Richard Biggs	Fred Drane	Trevor Jones
Barrie Cooper	Beryl Ezzard	Ros Kayes
Janet Dover	Susan Jefferies	David Mannings
Total: 9		

(The following member abstained from voting on the recommendations: David Harris)

9.22 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 32.1(ii) was recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Fred Drane	Paul Kimber
Michael Bevan	Beryl Ezzard	Rebecca Knox
Richard Biggs	Peter Finney	Mike Lovell
Steve Butler	Spencer Flower	David Mannings
Mike Byatt	Ian Gardner	Margaret Phipps
Andrew Cattaway	Robert Gould	Ian Smith
Ronald Coatsworth	David Harris	Daryl Turner
Robin Cook	Jill Haynes	David Walsh
Toni Coombs	Colin Jamieson	Peter Wharf
Barrie Cooper	Susan Jefferies	Kate Wheller
Hilary Cox	David Jones	John Wilson
Deborah Croney	Trevor Jones	
Janet Dover	Ros Kayes	
Total: 37		

Against

Total: 0

9.23 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 32.1(iii) was recorded as follows:-

For

Pauline Batstone	Fred Drane	Paul Kimber
Michael Bevan	Beryl Ezzard	Rebecca Knox
Richard Biggs	Peter Finney	Mike Lovell
Steve Butler	Spencer Flower	David Mannings
Mike Byatt	Ian Gardner	Margaret Phipps
Andrew Cattaway	Robert Gould	Ian Smith
Ronald Coatsworth	David Harris	Daryl Turner
Robin Cook	Jill Haynes	David Walsh
Toni Coombs	Colin Jamieson	Peter Wharf
Barrie Cooper	Susan Jefferies	Kate Wheller
Hilary Cox	David Jones	John Wilson
Deborah Croney	Trevor Jones	
Janet Dover	Ros Kayes	
Total: 37		

Against

Total: 0

Asset Management Capital Priorities

9.24 In relation to recommendation 478, a suggestion was made that in relation to asset management reporting that there should be a clear reference to the capital receipts as a result of the disposal of properties, and that the performance of the Dorset Development Partnership (DDP) should also be included in the reports. The Leader of the Council confirmed that summaries of capital receipts and income generation would be made clear in future reports, and that the DDP was a matter of interest for the Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

9.25 In accordance with Standing Order 44, the votes for and against Recommendation 478 were recorded as follows:-

Dorset County Council – 12 February 2015

For

Pauline Batstone
 Michael Bevan
 Richard Biggs
 Steve Butler
 Mike Byatt
 Andrew Cattaway
 Ronald Coatsworth
 Robin Cook
 Toni Coombs
 Barrie Cooper
 Hilary Cox
 Deborah Croney
Total: 36

Janet Dover
 Fred Drane
 Beryl Ezzard
 Peter Finney
 Spencer Flower
 Robert Gould
 David Harris
 Jill Haynes
 Colin Jamieson
 Susan Jefferies
 David Jones
 Trevor Jones

Ros Kayes
 Paul Kimber
 Rebecca Knox
 Mike Lovell
 David Mannings
 Margaret Phipps
 Ian Smith
 Daryl Turner
 David Walsh
 Peter Wharf
 Kate Wheller
 John Wilson

Against

Total: 0

9.26 On being put to the vote recommendation 478 was carried.

Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) – update

9.27 In relation to minute 42.5, one member expressed concern about the membership of the Shadow Board of the Local Authority Trading Company and that it was not possible to contact many responders to the most recent best value consultation on the Pan-Dorset proposal or that Parish and Town Councils had not been included in the consultation. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care clarified that the full three month consultation was carried out in relation to the LATC proposal for Dorset, and that the further consultation only invited comments on best value for a Pan-Dorset approach.

9.28 A further member asked a question as to whether a thorough scrutiny mechanism should be devised to consider the actions and monitor the activity of the LATC. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care confirmed that the LATC would be looking to take on services and buildings currently used and there should not be a noticeable change for service users. She also confirmed that it would be vital to have appropriate scrutiny arrangements and this would be addressed in due course and reported back through the usual reporting mechanisms. It was also acknowledged that the Dorset Business Case had been scrutinised, but the further consultation had been considered by appropriate officers and the Executive Advisory Panel on Pathways to Independence before decision by Cabinet.

Resolved

10. That the reports of the Cabinet on 19 November 2014, 17 December 2014, 14 January 2015 and 2 February 2015, and the following recommendations from 17 December 2014 and 2 February 2015 as set out below be adopted:

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18

32.1 *That the County Council be recommended to approve (as attached as Annexure 1 to these minutes):*

- (i) *The revenue budget strategy for 2015/16 to 2017/18;*
- (ii) *The budget requirement and precept for 2015/16; and*
- (iii) *The position on general balances and reserves.*

32.2 *That the Chief Financial Officer present to the County Council a schedule setting out the Council Tax for each category of dwelling and the precepts on each of the Dorset Councils for 2015/16.*

Reason for Recommendations

33. To approve the council tax increase for 2015/16 and to enable work to continue on refining and managing the County Council's budget plan for 2015/16 and beyond.

Asset Management Capital Priorities

478.1 That the County Council be asked to approve capital programme for 2015/16 to 2017/18, attached as the Annexure to these minutes.

478.2 That the policy of moving towards a position where the underlying need to borrow does not increase unless funded from other sources be endorsed.

Reason for Recommendations

479. The available resources after taking account of committed projects were insufficient to meet all the new bids in their entirety. It was therefore necessary for the Cabinet to confirm priorities for inclusion in the capital programme.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2015-16

35. That the County Council be recommended to approve (as attached as Annexure 2 to these minutes):

- (i) The Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2015/16 to 2017/18;
- (ii) The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement;
- (iii) The Treasury Management Strategy;
- (iv) The Investment Strategy; and
- (v) Delegation to the Chief Financial Officer to determine the most appropriate means of funding the Capital Programme.

Reasons for Recommendations

36.1 The Prudential Code provided a framework under which the Council's capital finance decisions were carried out. It required the Council to demonstrate that its capital expenditure plans were affordable, external borrowing was within prudent and sustainable levels and treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with professional good practice. Adherence to the Prudential Code was mandatory as set out in the Local Government Act 2003.

36.2 This report recommended the indicators to be applied by the Council for the financial years 2015/16 to 2017/18. The successful implementation of the code would assist in the objective of developing 'public services fit for the future'.

Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

11.1 The reports of the following meetings held on the dates stated were presented:-

Overview Committees

Adult and Community	21 January 2015
Children's Services	20 January 2015
Environment	19 January 2015

Scrutiny Committees

Audit and Scrutiny	25 November 2014
Audit and Scrutiny	16 December 2014
Dorset Health Scrutiny	17 November 2014

11.2 In relation to the minutes of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2014, the Chairman of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee explained that the recent scrutiny review of community transport had presented a new and useful method of scrutiny which should be embraced for future scrutiny reviews. He suggested that this

method for scrutiny be used, but the Audit and Scrutiny Committee would not be able to do this on a permanent basis and felt that a new forum be investigated to undertake this role.

11.3 The following matter was raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 December 2014:

Progress on Matters raised at Previous Meetings

11.4 In relation to the minute 187.1, the Chairman of the Committee highlighted that the Committee had asked for a further report on the business case of the Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company in January. He then requested that a report be submitted to the Committee at the earliest opportunity as it was important that the Committee had the opportunity to endorse the approach taken.

11.5 The following matter was raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee held on 21 January 2015:

Community Capacity Building

11.6 In relation to minute 11, the County Councillor for Sherborne Rural raised concern regarding the Pathways to Independence Programme and asked for clarification regarding the role of local members and member champions, together with confirmation of whether they would be invited in writing to encourage and raise awareness of the programme with the public. The Vice-Chairman of the Adult and Community Services Overview Committee explained that it was vital for all members to provide a link between the County Council and communities together with Parish and Town Councils. He highlighted that it was imperative that members and member champions worked with communities, organisations and groups which would contribute to the delivery of the programme.

11.7 The following matter was raised under the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Overview Committee held on 20 January 2015:

Corporate Parenting Board

11.8 In relation to minute 8, a concern was raised in relation to the future of Regulation 33 visits to children's homes by County Councillors which were reported to the Corporate Parenting Board. The Cabinet Member for Communities Health and Wellbeing, as the Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Board, clarified that the member's concerns regarding the value of county councillor visits had been discussed by the Board. A further concern regarding the replacement of visits with ones undertaken by independent inspectors who had social work qualification was also shared by the Board. She then reported that officers were liaising with the members who undertook the visits to meet and discuss the future as the visits were valued and efforts would be made to retain them as far as possible. It was noted that officers would be encouraged to contact the relevant members and that the issue would be raised at the next meeting of the Board.

Resolved

12. That the reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees be received.

Recommendations of Quasi/Legal Committees, Joint Committees and Other Committees

13.1 The recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee and Staffing Committee were presented and their adoption duly moved and seconded.

13.2 The following matter was raised in relation to the recommendation of the Standards and Governance Committee on 26 January 2015:

Local Pension Board

13.3 The Council considered the establishment of a Local Pension Board for Dorset in line with legislative changes. Members expressed a number of concerns regarding the requirement to establish the Board to scrutinise the Dorset Pension Fund Committee as the Committee was very well regarded and the Fund was successful. It was felt that it was not necessary to introduce the arrangements, but members recognised that there was no choice in the matter as it was prescribed by legislation.

13.4 It was noted that the Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing would contribute to LGA discussions and lobbying at a national level in relation to on-going representations to Government in opposition to the legislation. It was also acknowledged that efforts would be made to liaise with the Chief Executive and the Chief Financial Officer regarding the possibility of a joint arrangement across multiple authorities.

Resolved

14. That the following recommendations of the Standards and Governance Committee (Recommendation 9) and the Staffing Committee (Recommendation 17) set out below be adopted:-

Local Pension Board

9. *That the County Council approve the draft terms of reference (as amended) to establish the Dorset County Pension Fund Board (attached as an annexure to these minutes).*

Reason for Recommendation

10. *To ensure that the Fund complies with the Public Sector Pensions Act and the Local Government Pension Scheme regulations.*

Pay Policy Statement 2015/16

17. *That the Pay Policy Statement for the 2015/16 financial year be recommended for approval at the County Council meeting on 12 February 2015 (attached as an annexure to these minutes).*

Reason for Recommendation

18. *That Staffing Committee oversees matters relating to staff terms and conditions.*

Dorset Fire Authority

15.1 The reports of the meetings of the Dorset Fire Authority held on 4 November 2014 and 5 December 2014 were received.

15.2 In relation to the minutes of 4 November 2014, the Cabinet Member for Communities, Health and Wellbeing, as the Chairman of the Dorset Fire Authority, reported on the progress of the combination order in relation to Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and Wiltshire and Swindon Fire and Rescue Service following a successful consultation and signed draft order by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. It was hoped that the combination was anticipated to make savings in the region of £4m but this could possibly increase to £6m.

Resolved

16. That the reports of the Dorset Fire Authority be received.

Appointments to Committees 2014/15

17. The Council was informed of the following changes to Conservative Group appointments to Committees for the remainder of 2014/15 following recent changes to Cabinet portfolios:

Environment Overview Committee	-	Daryl Turner
Adult and Community Services Overview Committee	-	Steve Butler
Children's and Adult Services Appeals Committee	-	Pauline Batstone
Joint Public Health Board	-	Rebecca Knox
Health and Wellbeing Board	-	Jill Haynes
		Reserve: Colin Jamieson

Members then considered the election of Chairmen and appointment of Vice-Chairman as a result of the changes above:

Environment Overview Committee	-	Chairman: Daryl Turner
Children's and Adult Services Appeals Committee	-	Chairman: Lesley Dedman
Children's and Adult Services Appeals Committee	-	Vice-Chairman: Pauline Batstone

Resolved

18. That the changes to appointments to Committees be agreed, including Chairmen and Vice-Chairman, as detailed above.

Meeting Duration: 10.00am to 2.55pm

ANNEXURE 1

Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Mike Byatt to the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth
in relation to Olympic Legacy funding

Questions

The Olympic sailing event took place in Weymouth and Portland and Dorset County Council was the administrative authority appointed to approve spending on any underspends from this event as part of Olympic legacy. The Weymouth and Portland area is recognised by the County Council, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, and the Clinical Commissioning Group as having significant areas of health inequality, social deprivation and poverty.

Why did the County Council decide to allocate this fund across the whole of Dorset and include Bournemouth and Poole, which is contrary to the event being held in Weymouth and Portland and the needs of the local population and the principle purpose of the Olympic legacy fund?

Is this another example of how the County Council allocates its resources unfairly to the needs of local people in need of most support thus contributing further to discriminating against residents from Weymouth and Portland and inequality?

Answer

The Olympic Legacy fund came from monies the Department of Health allocated to the pan Dorset PCT to ensure all NHS facilities across Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole had the appropriate readiness and resilience for the 2012 games. The PCT generously decided that money that was left over from the DH grant after the games could become a local 'Olympic Legacy Fund' to promote one of the primary goals of the original UK bid i.e. to promote involvement of children in sport and physical activity. The money was transferred to DCC from the then PCT in April 2013.

The PCT was clear in the grant that the monies should benefit all the population of Dorset as per the original grant from the DH. Inequalities, which are pervasive across all authorities, are one of the key criteria in deciding on the merits of each of the project bids. There have been representatives from the NHS and district, county and both unitary authorities in the project allocation and decision making process from the outset.

Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Susan Jefferies to the Cabinet Member for Environment
in relation to Road Gritting near Schools

Questions

Last Tuesday (February 3rd) there was a potentially very nasty accident in Corfe Mullen. A car skidded out of control on an ungritted road on the approach to Henbury View School, within 100 yards of the school. It mounted the path, knocked down a mother, and her 5 year old son just missing the baby in the pushchair. It then knocked over an electric pole knocking electric wires into the road. The emergency services were called, neither the ambulance nor the 2 fire appliances could get right up to the accident as they too found the road too icy. The fire fighters had to use the school's supply of salt to grit the road before their vehicles could deal with the electric wires. During this time there were half a dozen further minor accidents.

Miraculously no one was seriously hurt, though many people were deeply shocked and everyone at the school has asked me what we can do. I have asked for several years that the County Council gritting lorries should be used to grit roads approaching all the County schools, including the smaller schools, not just the current policy of schools with more than 500 pupils. The answer has been that the Parish Councils can take responsibility for residential roads.

Can I ask:

1. That this policy be revisited as a matter of urgency to protect all our school children and allow them safe access to education?
2. That if the responsibility be put on the Parish Councils that we should have some assurance that they do carry this out and have assistance with equipment and materials to enable them to conduct this vital task?

Answer

The County Council has a clear policy on the criteria for parts of the Network that will be included within our Priority Salting network and approaches to schools with less than 500 pupils do not meet this criteria and therefore are not included.

The preparation of a winter service policy has to be prepared taking a number of factors into account into account. Should we adopt an approach where all roads approaching schools across the County are included irrespective of the number of pupils, this will have a significant implication on our salting operation with either more gritting vehicles being required or additional time being required by the service to complete a precautionary salting action. Unfortunately we do not have the revenue budget funding available to consider such a move.

A Members Development Panel recently formulated a policy relating to the provision and maintenance of salt bins and we have been working with Parish Councils in relation to their position and maintenance and a number of sites have been proposed and bins sited at the expense of Parish Council. The criteria within the policy states that should the site where the bin is situated be deemed as offering a "strategic" value to the maintenance of highway network the County Council will fill and maintain the stock of salt at no additional cost. If however the bin is regarded as a "Community" bin where it has no strategic value, then the County Council will fill the bin at the beginning of the season and should the Parish Council wish to have the stock replenished at anytime they will liaise with Highways Officers and meet the cost of the salt provided.

We would be happy for the Parish Council to propose to have a bin situated in the vicinity of the school to assist in any future salting of the school approach by the community as happens elsewhere across the County.

Questions Under Standing Order 20

Question from Ros Kayes to the Cabinet Member for Environment
in relation to Ask Dorset Engagement and the Holistic Transport Review

Questions

- a) The Ask Dorset Engagement Results Bulletin talks about 'Identifying priorities for our corporate plan and setting appropriate budgets relying on a broad range of evidence.' It states 'The Ask Dorset results are a key part of this, alongside a wide range of data including budgets and statistics about our communities.' It also refers to the significance of 'Access and Connectivity', saying 'In a large rural county it is important that people are able to get around to go to work, school and to access goods and services. This may be physically getting around, therefore relying on our road network and for some on public transport, both of which were regarded as high priorities by the public.'

Individual Town Level Results from the Ask Dorset exercise showed that the third most significant issue was rural buses/transport. In fact this was the top issue in Highcliffe, Upton, Bridport and Lyme Regis and second in Dorchester, Beaminster, Blandford and Wareham, third in Gillingham, Swanage, Verwood and Sherborne, and fourth in Wimborne.

When we undertook the Ask Dorset survey in 2014, what provisions were made for the Council to be held to account for taking action to address Dorset residents' concerns?

- b) The dictionary definition of the word 'Holistic' is '*characterised by the belief that the parts of something are intimately interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole.*'

Making the assumption that our Holistic Transport Review is, in part, a response to the high priority given by Dorset residents to public transport, why is this review not prepared to consider either the adoption of quality contracts (which enable statutory provision of routes and services to be locked in by an agreement between providers and service users) or the use of higher rebates to bus companies for concessionary fares as a way of ensuring stability in commercially run services, considering that such options are undoubtedly 'interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole' and should therefore automatically form part of a genuinely 'holistic' review?

Answer

- a) The results from the summer 2014 'Ask Dorset' engagement exercise provide evidence of what issues are most important to our communities. Cabinet confirmed, on 22nd October 2014, that the Ask Dorset "information will be used to inform our budget and corporate priorities, which will be set out in the new Corporate Plan 2015-18". The Audit and Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference are to "challenge, review and scrutinise the decisions or actions taken by the Cabinet" and to "provide clear focus on scrutiny matters in relation to the County Council's strategic approach to Dorset wide objectives, budget plans ...". Therefore the Audit and Scrutiny Committee has the provision to hold the council to account regarding the use of the Ask Dorset results, specifically whether they have been used to inform the council's budget and corporate priorities.

- b) The Holistic Transport Review is one of the key projects identified within the Forward Together Programme. In early 2014, Dorset County Council commissioned APSE solutions to carry out a review of our passenger transport services. The APSE review made 12 headline recommendations which were accepted and are being progressed through the continued work Review.

The Holistic Transport Review involves all Directorates across three key workstreams;

- Strategy & Performance (Workstream Lead - Anne Salter, Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Performance, Children's Services)
- Policy & Practice (Workstream Lead - Philip Minns, Head of Learning & Inclusion, Children's Services)
- Operational Delivery (Workstream Lead - Matthew Piles, Head of Economy, Environment and the Economy)

Whilst the Holistic Transport Review was not established in response to the Ask Dorset survey the timing does of course provide an excellent opportunity to ensure that the outcomes are incorporated into the future development work. An early example is the inclusion of a Community Engagement role in the new structure to help build and develop strong community links and wider travel options.

The Holistic Transport Review will include consideration of a wide range of options and nothing has been excluded. Future procurement and commissioning approaches will be developed as part of the on-going work of the review, which will explore the pros and cons of both Bus Quality Contracts and Partnerships.

As discussed at Environment Overview Committee a Quality Contract is normally entered into through a competitive tendering process. Our current contracts end in 2016 with an extension possible of 1 + 1 years. The County Council may take up this option to extend (at least in part) to provide a greater opportunity to consider what bus network should be provided within an holistic integrated travel strategy and how it will be procured.

The Environment Overview Committee on 19 January 2015 considered the position with regard to Concessionary Fare reimbursement. The method of calculation is complex, but the onus is on the bus operator to provide data to support a claim for a higher reimbursement rate. Bus operators provide their information annually and the next opportunity for revision will be from April 2016. The committee concluded that the current basis using the Department for Transport calculator was the most appropriate method.

ANNEXURE 2

Leader's Budget Speech 2015-16

Thank you Mr Chairman and I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words about next year's budget. There continue to be tough choices to be made as we strive to deliver the services that our residents tell us they value with ever reducing funding. The proposals I will set out today are challenging but we are ambitious and optimistic for the future. They build on the foundations so ably laid down by my predecessor. I can't promise that it will be any easier than the last few budgets, but what I can promise is that by now the themes are familiar. And our changes are gathering momentum.

Before I outline the details, I must thank Richard Bates, Jim McManus and their finance teams together with Debbie Ward, Service Directors and all of the Heads of Service for the considerable amount of effort put into the annual budget process. But most especially I am grateful for the input of you, fellow members, in shaping the plans for the coming year. Whatever happens on May 7th, we know that our funding will continue to reduce in coming years. So we need to be innovative and radical in shaping the future for Dorset. Although we will have less to spend, we will continue to be the major force for change in the county. Today we have a balanced budget to approve for 2015/16. But work has already started on meeting the challenges of the next two years. And our horizon extends beyond that.

I would like to start with some good news about the UK Economy. It's a while since a Leader introducing the budget could say that! 2014 saw economic growth of 2.7% and latest projections from the Office for Budget Responsibility show expected growth in GDP of 3% for 2015.

However, even with this GDP growth, the national budget deficit is expected to fall by only £6.3 billion this year to £91.3 billion, around half the decline which had been forecast.

Inflation and unemployment both continue to fall. CPI Inflation is now down to 0.5% and looks like it could fall even further, largely as a result of the significant reduction in oil prices. Unemployment is now down to 5.6%, well below the original level of 7% at which the governor of the Bank of England was going to start raising interest rates. These remain at 0.5% and it looks like they may well now stay there for the rest of 2015.

On the currency markets, the weakening of the Euro has resulted from the sluggish economic growth in the Eurozone. Whilst this may give us cheaper holidays in the summer, it will start to push up the price of UK exports which won't help our own growth. The full impact of the recent events in Greece remains to be seen.

So, things are looking a little brighter, although there is still a significant deficit in the public finances to be dealt with. And there are international threats.

So, how does this translate into the prospects for Local Government? In my view, it remains clear that local government will continue to take the brunt of the national programme to address the deficit for years to come. So our Forward Together transformation programme remains crucial.

That's why we embarked during 2014 on our major engagement and consultation exercise, "Ask Dorset", an opportunity for the people of Dorset and our partners to help frame our future plans.

The exercise was well received and enabled us to talk to a wide section of our residents. We listened and in our budget today we have taken account of what we heard. Later in the year we will continue the dialogue with “Ask Dorset 2”.

Chairman, in respect of our plans for 2015-16 I'd like to turn first to the capital budget. It is imperative that despite current funding constraints we continue to invest in our future. This means maintaining and improving the buildings and infrastructure we need, whilst rationalising and reducing property holdings we don't need, right across the County.

The Ask Dorset campaign highlighted the condition of our road network as the public's highest priority. I am therefore delighted that we were able to allocate an additional £2m of funding for carriageway repairs when the capital priorities were agreed in December. Since then we have had further good news. The Transport Funding announcement on 23rd December has seen the Highway Maintenance allocation rise to £13.9m which is £2m better than we were expecting. Bu still short of what we really need.

The DfT's new funding model also makes available an additional £575m Challenge Fund, accessible through a bidding process and officers have submitted our bid in the past few days. Our excellent track record means we are well placed for success.

Another significant capital allocation is £4m to mitigate the risk of landslips at Dinah's Hollow, Melbury Abbas. The C13 must be reopened as soon as it is safe to do so and resilience restored to the wider highways network. We recognise the strategic importance of this north/south route and will be exploring possibilities for longer term improvements.

We have also managed to secure significant funding from the government's Growth Deal and the Local Transport Board via the Local Enterprise Partnership. The long awaited maintenance project on the A338 Bournemouth Spur Road has received funding of £19.8m and a further £16m to schemes in Dorset which will improve the road network and support employment growth at Bournemouth Airport. Increasingly we will be delivering projects funded through the LEP. I was delighted that the Leaders' Growth Board was formed last year and I look forward to developing that role as we look at new models of governance.

In the current year we have either completed or nearly completed a number of projects. Examples include the coastal stabilisation project at Lyme Regis, the new Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre at Thorncombe Woods, a jointly funded with the Heritage Lottery, the National Trust and others.

The £37 million investment to deliver the Purbeck Review – the three to two tier school re-organisation has progressed well. This has resulted in the replacement of three primary schools, as well as numerous enhancement projects at other schools in the area. Careful budgeting on this programme now means that we have also been able to commit to rebuilding Bere Regis primary school.

The £8m scheme for a replacement Household Recycling Centre in Bridport is well under way and will be completed later this summer. A vital facility for the west of the county.

Looking ahead, one of our major challenges is to change the way we work. Our property estate will be reshaped to support the services we provide, rather than the other way round. We have a target of reducing running costs by £3.2m by 2020. We are opening up County Hall. We are rationalising our property in Bridport and Wimborne. Smarter computing will be key to enabling this to happen and work is in hand to make sure this is rolled out on a reliable timetable. We are also investing in replacement IT systems for adult social care (AIS), Children's Social Care (RAISE) and the Library Management System.

A healthy and vibrant economy is essential. That's why we are investing in the Superfast Dorset project with our district and borough partners. Superfast broadband is now available in many places for the first time due to our funding, including Bridport, Charmouth, Upwey, Preston, Broadmayne and Martinstown - more than 24,000 residents and businesses. Take up is in its early stages, but already 10% of residents and businesses have subscribed. By the end of financial year 2015-2016 our ambitious target is to have provided over 80,000 premises with access to the new service, unlocking our economic potential.

Chairman, we are doing all of this without increasing our borrowing above the policy agreed 2 years ago. By 2016/17 we will be in a position where the underlying need to borrow does not increase, unless funded from other sources. This will still enable the Council to invest over £185 million in capital projects over the next three years, without any extra burden on the revenue budget.

This progressive capital investment programme demonstrates our commitment to the communities of Dorset. We are investing now, to look after present and future generations. Chairman, I now move onto the revenue budget for the Council Year 2015-16. The recommendation is for a Net Budget Requirement for 2015-16 of £267.1 million.

This year's Local Government Financial Settlement indicates a net reduction in the aggregate Settlement Funding Assessment of 14.5% in 2015-16 down from £82.3m to £70.4m.

When income from council tax, public health funding and the Better Care Fund for integration of social care services with health and the freeze grant on offer for 2015-16 are included, the government's headline figure for our spending power is an increase of 1.92%. Don't you believe it!

Because against this, we have seen a further reduction in specific grants, particularly as a result of Academy conversions. This loss of grants, together with pay, cost and demographic pressures equate to almost £20m for 2015-16. Even a modest increase in council tax and growth in the tax base which provides around £5m of extra funding, leaves us a further £15m of savings to deliver in 2015-16. This is on top of over £60 million already saved in the previous four years.

We have also had to set additional sums aside to deal with unavoidable pressures: the impact of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards in Adult and Community Services, additional capacity in Children's field social work for the next two years and also an increased budget for verge maintenance, quite rightly demanded by our members.

Projections for the following two years would suggest similar levels of savings to be delivered, taking us past £100m in total. The drive for efficiency must continue.

It is also important that we work closely with all of our public service partners in Dorset to make public funds go further; collaborating wherever possible and making the best use of the resources available. The Pan-Dorset Local Authority Trading Company will be a significant example of putting this into practice, with Bournemouth and Poole as our partners.

We face significant issues regarding the implementation of the Care Act which comes into statute in April 2015. The complex funding reforms will come into effect from April 2016. We are grappling to understand the associated costs: a key risk for the council.

Of the savings target for 2015-16, £14.7m has been identified as part of the Forward Together change programme. This leaves a gap of around £0.5m to balance the budget for next year. To avoid having to make unnecessary cuts in the short term, we propose using £532,000 of the collection fund surplus to balance the budget in 2015-16.

Proposals to achieve the required annual revenue savings have been considered by the overview and scrutiny committees and have been the subject of initial consultation with the business community. Further consultation will take place on individual measures, together with the appropriate impact assessments, as details are firmed up.

I can assure the tax payers of Dorset that this Council's finances remain very sound, with earmarked reserves amounting to around £30 million to meet future commitments and general balances of just over £10m.

For the first three years of this spending period, this Council managed to maintain a freeze on Council Tax with the help of council tax freeze grants. However, we, along with many other Councils, reached the point last year whereby further reductions in funding were likely to have a serious impact on the delivery of front line services. Last year a modest increase of just under 2% was made and we propose this will be repeated next year. Two percent on the county council precept is £23.76 per annum for a Band D council tax payer, or around 45 pence per week.

I believe this modest increase is an acceptable way to avoid a further £1.8 million cut in the base budget. When reaching this decision, we need to bear in mind that freeze grants are monies which are subject to the whim of Government. If we are to realise our vision for more independent local government, we need to raise more of our own income locally.

The Peer Challenge placed an emphasis on the Council needing to be Member Led and much work has been done to enable this to happen. But there is still much to do. So, get engaged Members, be part of shaping the future. A great opportunity will be the workshop which has been arranged for this afternoon looking at your thoughts and ideas about how services can be sustained when our budgets are under such pressure.

As part of this member-led approach, last year we allocated every Member of this Council a Divisional budget of £5,000, to be spent on helping the communities they were elected to serve to do more for themselves. I am pleased to announce that we will continue this scheme for 2015-16 and we will look to review its effectiveness later this year, with a view to it becoming a permanent feature if it has proved effective.

In concluding Chairman, I am conscious that budget speeches are, of necessity, rather dry and technical. Sound finances are the essential foundation to delivering our vision. But they are not all that we are about. My view is that great opportunities for Dorset lie ahead. There must be a response to the devolution debate opened up by last year's Scottish referendum. In England we have heard much about the great city regions but we need to ensure that the demand for County devolution is heard. We are looking at the possibility of a combined authority to support our local economy. In doing so, the old debates about unitary government can be consigned to history. If we are to be successful in attracting investment we must demonstrate we have the streamlined arrangements in place to deliver. We must be ready when the dust has settled after May 7th to seize the initiative.

I commend the budget resolutions set out on Full Council Agenda item 8 Reports of the Cabinet and in particular Recommendations 32, 35 and 478 as they contain the necessary resolutions on the Medium Term Financial Plan, including the Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2015-16.