

MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held remotely on Tuesday, 13 October 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Council Members Present (virtually)

The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor
Councillor Rob Wood (in the Chair)

Councillors

Dave Ashmore	Lee Mason
Matthew Atkins	Terry Norton
Chris Attwell	Stephen Morgan
Simon Bosher	Gemma New
Tom Coles	Robert New
Cal Corkery	Steve Pitt
Ben Dowling	Will Purvis
Jason Fazackarley	Darren Sanders
George Fielding	Jeanette Smith
John Ferrett	Lynne Stagg
David Fuller	Judith Smyth
Scott Payter-Harris	Luke Stubbs
Graham Heaney	Benedict Swann
Hannah Hockaday	Linda Symes
Jo Hooper	Claire Udy
Suzy Horton	Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Lee Hunt	Steve Wemyss
Frank Jonas BEM	Matthew Winnington
Donna Jones	Neill Young
Leo Madden	Tom Wood
Hugh Mason	

General Procedural Announcements

Link to the agenda

<https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=146&MId=4265&Ver=4>

The Lord Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting that is being held virtually in response to the limitations placed on government by the Covid-19 pandemic. He advised that the meeting would be run by reference to the model standing orders as set out in the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings Regulations 2020. The Lord Mayor then ran through the etiquette relating to virtual meetings.

66. Declarations of Members' Interests

Councillor Donna Jones declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take part in the debate or vote.

Councillor Ben Dowling declared a personal but non-pecuniary interest in notice of motion 12(c) and would take part in the debate or vote.

Councillor Matthew Winnington declared a personal but non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would stay in the debate and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Tom Wood declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take part in the debate or vote.

Councillor Darren Sanders declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Dave Ashmore declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Gemma New declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 and would not take part in that debate or vote. She also declared a personal interest in agenda item 12(c) as she is a private renter and would therefore not take part in that debate or vote.

Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and said he would be taking part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Lee Mason declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take in the debate or vote.

Councillor Will Purvis declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Robert New declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take part in the debate or vote.

Councillor David Fuller declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Chris Attwell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Luke Stubbs declared a personal and pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take part in the debate or vote.

Councillor Judith Smyth declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Claire Udy declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) in that she is a tenant and would take part in the debate and vote. She also declared a personal, prejudicial interest in agenda item 8 in that she is a director of PATCH which was mentioned part way through the debate so she took no further part in the debate and did not vote on this item.

Councillor Steve Pitt declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) in that he owns some rental properties but would take part in the debate and vote.

Councillor Tom Coles declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) as he is a private renter but would take part in any debate and vote.

Councillor Jason Fazackarley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) as he is a tenant, but would take part in any debate and vote.

Councillor Stephen Morgan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) in that he is a tenant. He would take part in any debate and vote.

Councillor Linda Symes declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in agenda item 12(c) and would take part in any debate and vote.

Councillor Steve Wemyss declared a non-pecuniary interest in question number 6 concerning Fernhurst School.

Councillor Hannah Hockaday declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 12(c) and would not take part in any debate or vote.

67. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Virtual Council meeting held on 21 July 2020

It was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Seconded by Councillor Donna Jones

That the minutes of the council meeting held on 21 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record. These were agreed by assent.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the council meeting held on 21 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

68. To receive such communications as the Lord Mayor may desire to lay before the Council, including apologies for absence

Apologies for lateness were given on behalf of Councillors Steve Wemyss and Hannah Hockaday. In addition Councillor Stephen Morgan said that he may need to leave part of the meeting in order to carry out parliamentary business.

The Lord Mayor expressed sincere condolences to Councillor Lee Mason and his family on the very sad passing away of the former Lady Mayoress, Mrs Sylvia Mason.

69. Deputations from the Public under Standing Order No 24

The Lord Mayor advised that one written deputation had been received for this meeting and had been previously circulated. The deputation was from Rebecca Ozaniec in respect of agenda item 8 - Leamington House and Horatia House Update and Next Steps.

The Local Democracy Manager read out the deputation.

The Lord Mayor thanked Rebecca Ozaniec for her deputation.

70. Questions from the Public under Standing Order 25

There were no questions from the public.

71. Appointments

These were dealt with under agenda item 10.

72. Urgent Business - To receive and consider any urgent and important business from Members of the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order No 26

There was no urgent business.

73. Recommendations from the Cabinet Meeting held on 15 September 2020

Minute 53 - Leamington House and Horatia House Update and Next Steps

This was opposed.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Seconded by Councillor Darren Sanders

That the recommendations contained in minute 53 be approved.

The exemption relating to Appendix 1 of the report was passed by assent but members assented to this item being debated and determined in open session with no reference being made to the contents of exempt Appendix 1.

Following debate a recorded vote was requested and this was agreed by assent.

The following members voted in favour of the recommendations contained in minute 53:

Councillors Dave Ashmore
 Chris Attwell
 Tom Coles

Leo Madden
Hugh Mason
Stephen Morgan

Cal Corkery
Ben Dowling
Jason Fazackarley
John Ferrett
George Fielding
David Fuller
Graham Heaney
Suzy Horton
Lee Hunt

Steve Pitt
Will Purvis
Darren Sanders
Jeanette Smith
Judith Smyth
Lynne Stagg
Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Matthew Winnington
Rob Wood
Tom Wood

No members voted against the recommendations.

The following members abstained:

Councillors	Matthew Atkins	Robert New
	Simon Boshier	Terry Norton
	Scott Payter-Harris	Luke Stubbs
	Jo Hooper	Benedict Swann
	Frank Jonas	Linda Symes
	Donna Jones	Steve Wemyss
	Lee Mason	Neill Young

This was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the full deconstruction and redevelopment scheme for the two tower blocks is added to the capital programme in the sum of £120m.**
- 2. That the scheme is funded by a suitable mix of HRA and General Fund Prudential Borrowing as determined by the S.151 Officer.**
- 3. That the scheme can only proceed, including through its procurement gateways, if a satisfactory financial appraisal which demonstrates viability is approved by the Section 151 Officer.**
- 4. That, given the early stage of design, delegated authority be given to the Section 151 Officer to vary the overall scheme cost and borrow as required but subject to the Section 151 Officer being satisfied that the associated financial appraisal demonstrates continued viability and acceptable risk and that the gross cost of the scheme does not exceed £145m.**
- 5. In the event that the scheme varies significantly from the design parameters (described in section 5) and/or the gross cost exceeds £145m, even if viability can still be demonstrated, the scheme will not proceed without further approval from the City Council.**

74. Recommendations from the Cabinet Meeting held on 6 October 2020

Minute 58 - Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2019/20

This was opposed to allow for clarification.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Seconded by Councillor Darren Sanders

That the recommendations contained in minute 58 be approved.

Following a short debate, the recommendations contained in minute 58 were approved by assent.

RESOLVED that the actual prudential and treasury management indicators based on the unaudited accounts, as shown in Appendix B, (an explanation of the prudential and treasury management indicators is contained in Appendix C) be noted.

75. Political Proportionality Review on Committee and Panels

The report from the Chief Executive had been previously circulated. In response to the recommendations in the report, it was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

Seconded by Councillor Donna Jones

1. To adopt the overall political balance and allocation of seats as set out in the chief executive's report, and agree the following changes on the basis -
 - A. That the Conservative Group gain two seats from Councillor Lee Mason as a previously non-aligned Member and those two seats be on the Licensing Committee and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, both previously held by Councillor Lee Mason who will continue holding those seats as a Conservative Group Member

2. That unrelated to the above changes -

The Liberal Democrat seat vacancies be filled as set out in the report, namely

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Full Members Councillor Tom Wood and Councillor Fuller- with Councillor Fuller becoming the Chair (previously held by Councillor Attwell)

Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel - full Member Councillor Purvis

Governance and Audit and Standards Committee - Full Member
Councillor Tom Wood

Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel - Standing
Deputy Councillor Will Purvis

Scrutiny Management Panel - Standing Deputy - Councillor Tom Wood

The proposal was CARRIED by general assent.

RESOLVED

1. **To adopt the overall political balance and allocation of seats as set out in the chief executive's report, and agree the following changes on the basis -**
 - A. **That the Conservative Group gain two seats from Councillor Lee Mason as a previously non-aligned Member and those two seats be on the Licensing Committee and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel, both previously held by Councillor Lee Mason who will continue holding those seats as a Conservative Group Member**
2. **That unrelated to the above changes -**

The Liberal Democrat seat vacancies be filled as set out in the report, namely

Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Full Members Councillor Tom Wood and Councillor Fuller- with Councillor Fuller becoming the Chair (previously held by Councillor Attwell)

Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel - full Member Councillor Purvis

Governance and Audit and Standards Committee - Full Member Councillor Tom Wood

Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel - Standing Deputy Councillor Will Purvis

Scrutiny Management Panel - Standing Deputy - Councillor Tom Wood

76. **Urgent Decision by the Chief Executive - Use of Standing Order 58 - To adopt revised Standing Order 24**

The council noted this decision.

77. Notices of Motion

The Lord Mayor asked members to please note that following the full council meeting of 21 July 2020, the council agreed to revise Standing Order (32(d)). Consequently, all notices of motion on the agenda will automatically be dealt with at this meeting, thereby dispensing with a three minute presentation from the proposer and subsequent vote to enable its consideration.

There were five notices of motion on the agenda for this meeting.

77.a Pyramids

It was

Proposed by Councillor Luke Stubbs
Seconded by Councillor Linda Symes

That notice of motion (a) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Tom Coles
Seconded by Councillor Graham Heaney

"Add new paragraph at end:

"This council regrets the process followed for making the decision which lacked consultation with residents, users and members."

The mover of the original motion agreed to subsume into it the amendment.

Following debate, upon being put to a roll call vote, the substantive motion including the amendment was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that this council regrets the closure of the swimming pool at the Pyramids.

This council regrets the process followed for making the decision which lacked consultation with residents, users and members.

77.b Hampshire Fire and Rescue

It was

Proposed by Councillor Jason Fazackarley
Seconded by Councillor Lee Hunt

That notice of motion (b) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Robert New
Seconded by Councillor Terry Norton

"After the 7 recommendations amend the next paragraph:

Add after "Fire Authority" the words " and a representative from each of the political groups on the council" and;

Add after "those concerns" the words " and also to send the response to all members of the city council."

The paragraph to therefore read:

"This council takes the safety of its residents extremely seriously and requests that Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service meet urgently with the Council's representative on the Fire Authority **and a representative from each of the political groups on the council** to answer those concerns **and also to send the response to all members of the city council.**"

The proposer of the original motion agreed to subsume into it the amendment proposed by Councillor Robert New.

Following debate, the substantive motion including the amendment was adopted by assent.

RESOLVED that

At the time of the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Risk Review in 2016, the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) raised serious concerns about future crewing of the appliances in Portsmouth and the ability of the service to be able to function effectively with the reduced crewing levels.

They were particularly concerned about the crewing of the Aerial Ladder Platform (ALP) and that removing its dedicated crew would limit the ability to deploy this appliance to high rise fires in Portsmouth.

After the Risk Review, a compromise was reached after suggestions were made by the FBU to management that whilst not restoring the crew, did offer some additional flexibility. This is welcomed by the Council.

However, it is becoming clear that the crewing issues now extend beyond those of the ALP and there are wider concerns. This Council would like Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service to provide responses to the following questions:

Specifically:

1. **Has the service become too lean and does it lack resilience in terms of frontline personnel?**
2. **Does the service expect that an upcoming round of recruitment will address the crewing shortfalls?**
3. **Is the service exploring every opportunity to backfill staff shortages through overtime?**
4. **Can the service confirm that frontline and immediately available appliances are being taken off the runs to backfill elsewhere in the County and that it is cover in Portsmouth and Southampton that is mainly suffering from these diversions to backfill shortfall?**
5. **Can the service confirm whether any of these occasions where appliances have been diverted to backfill for shortfalls elsewhere in the County have resulted in a longer response time to a fire?**
6. **Can the service confirm how often these shortfalls in crewing are happening and therefore how often Portsmouth has not had the available crewing levels that were promised in the Risk Review in 2016?**
7. **Can the service give a categoric assurance that in the event of a high rise fire in the city, that the response time to that incident would not exceed those indicated in the 2016 Risk Review and that the ALP could be deployed.**

This council takes the safety of its residents extremely seriously and requests that Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service meet urgently with the Council's representative on the Fire Authority and a representative from each of the political groups on the council to answer those concerns and also to send the response to all members of the city council.

The Council requests that an update is provided by the council's representative on the Hampshire Fire Authority at the next meeting of full council in November.

Council adjourned at 1740.

Council resumed at 1750.

77.c Landlord licensing and the Private Rented Sector strategy

It was

Proposed by Councillor Cal Corkery
Seconded by Councillor George Fielding

That notice of motion (c) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Darren Sanders

Seconded by Councillor Lee Hunt

- " In Par 1, please replace everything after "with" with "the Office for National Statistics indicating last November indicating that it was 19% of all properties."
- In par 2, replace "privately rented homes" with "houses of multiple occupation,"
- In par 3, replace all after 2019 with: "the administration tasked officers to look at ways of driving up standards in the private rented sector. That month, the Labour Group also proposed a motion calling on the council to implement a Selective Licensing scheme."
- In par 4, add new final sentence: "However, major issues such as rent arrears or poor property conditions are not conditions of those licences."
- In par 6, delete the second sentence.
- In first bullet point add after "sector", "and welcomes the steps the Council has taken to help them, including:
 - a. Expanding the rent deposit scheme and introducing a guarantor scheme to help those who cannot afford to rent privately
 - b. Buying more homes, including empty private properties
 - c. Working with the University, Police and landlords to tackle recent COVID-related antisocial behaviour
 - d. Expanding Rent it Right to help landlords fill in less in exchange for lower rents, while prosecuting those who fail.
 - e. Installing central heating, offering free fuel vouchers, home visits and even fridge freezers to help private tenants lead better lives"
- Add new second bullet point: Endorses Council's October 2019 resolution that: "any future policy it produces on making renting privately easier and safer must include ways to tackle rent arrears and poor property conditions"
- In new third bullet point, add at start, "On that basis,"
- In new fourth bullet point, add after 'behaviour': "Noting that the Cabinet Member for Housing asked officers to explore ways to see how antisocial behaviour in privately rented properties can be included in the Council's enforcement regime at the HMO Governance Board on September 16th."

The proposer of the original motion agreed to subsume into it the amendment proposed by Councillor Sanders.

Following debate, upon being put to a roll call vote, the substantive notice of motion incorporating the amendment was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

The size of the Private Rented Sector in Portsmouth has grown significantly in recent years with the Office for National Statistics last November indicating that it was 19% of all properties.

The rapid growth in the number of houses of multiple occupation, has led to a range of issues relating to housing conditions, property management and anti-social behaviour, particularly in areas with high concentrations of privately rented homes.

In July 2019 the administration tasked officers to look at ways of driving up standards in the private rented sector. That month, the Labour Group also proposed a motion calling on the council to implement a Selective Licensing scheme.

Such licensing schemes allow councils to ensure landlords and letting agents meet 'fit and proper persons' tests in addition to placing responsibilities on them to prove their properties meet decent housing standards. However, major issues such as rent arrears or poor property conditions are not conditions of those licences.

The administration accepted the need to do more to regulate rented housing and tasked council officers with drafting a Private Rented Sector strategy. That draft strategy, approved by Cabinet in March 2020, recommended consulting on introducing an Additional Licensing scheme for small HMOs.

However, the draft strategy does not propose to explore the use of a Selective Licensing scheme to cover non-HMO privately rented properties.

Full Council therefore:

- **Supports the progress that has been made toward developing a council strategy for the Private Rented Sector and welcomes the steps the Council has taken to help them, including:**
 - a. **Expanding the rent deposit scheme and introducing a guarantor scheme to help those who cannot afford to rent privately**
 - b. **Buying more homes, including empty private properties**
 - c. **Working with the University, Police and landlords to tackle recent COVID-related antisocial behaviour**
 - d. **Expanding Rent it Right to help landlords fill in less in exchange for lower rents, while prosecuting those who fail.**

- e. **Installing central heating, offering free fuel vouchers, home visits and even fridge freezers to help private tenants lead better lives.**
- **Endorses Council's October 2019 resolution that: "any future policy it produces on making renting privately easier and safer must include ways to tackle rent arrears and poor property conditions**
- **On that basis, requests Cabinet reconsider its decision not to include Selective Licensing as a policy intervention as part of the Private Rented Sector strategy.**
- **Suggests Cabinet be asked to explore whether more stringent conditions can be put into landlord licensing agreements with regard to responsible property management, for example dealing with anti-social behaviour, noting that the Cabinet Member for Housing asked officers to explore ways to see how antisocial behaviour in privately rented properties can be included in the Council's enforcement regime at the HMO Governance Board on September 16th.**

77.d Road Re-routing

It was

Proposed by Councillor Luke Stubbs
Seconded by Councillor Linda Symes

That notice of motion (d) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Judith Smyth
Seconded by Councillor Tom Coles

"Amendment

Delete "A2047" and replace with "A288".

The proposer of the original motion agreed to accept the amendment.

Following debate, upon being put to a roll call vote, the substantive notice of motion incorporating the amendment was CARRIED.

RESOLVED

The temporary closure of the seafront road in Eastney resulted in congestion, severe parking problems and a large number of accidents in Eastern Parade.

Council believes that Eastern Parade is not of A Road quality. It therefore asks Cabinet to investigate the possibility of re-routing the A288 along the seafront.

77.e Hidden Disabilities: Becoming a Sunflower Friendly Council

It was

Proposed by Councillor Tom Coles
Seconded by Councillor George Fielding

That notice of motion (e) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

Following debate notice of motion (e) was CARRIED by assent.

RESOLVED

One in five people in the UK have a disability and 80% of those are hidden.

Living with a hidden disability can make daily life more demanding for many people. The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower enables people to discreetly indicate to others that they have a hidden disability and may need additional support, help or more time. The Sunflower is recognised across a huge number of organisations in the UK ranging from transport to retail to leisure.

Becoming a Sunflower Friendly Council will promote the city as being welcoming of those with hidden disabilities. Studies have shown localities supporting the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower are seeing an increase in footfall from wearers of the Sunflower.

As a Sunflower Friendly Council, Portsmouth will:

- **Support local people with hidden disabilities**
- **Assist local businesses to benefit from an increase in visitors and revenue**
- **Demonstrate that the Council is inclusive and enhance the Council's accessibility credentials.**

Signing up to recognise the scheme officially will give the Council access to Training webinars as well as access to Hidden Disabilities Sunflower digital assets to promote the Council's awareness of the Sunflower and support those with hidden disabilities.

The Council therefore resolves to sign up to the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower scheme and become an officially recognised Sunflower Friendly Local Authority.

78. Questions from Members under Standing Order No 17

There were eight questions before Council today.

Question 1 was from Councillor Donna Jones

"Many buses travel across the city empty, especially early in the morning since the COVID 19 pandemic. Will the cabinet member consider ways to enable pensioners to use their bus passes before 9:30am to maximise the use of buses and accessibility for older people in Portsmouth?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation, Councillor Lynne Stagg.

Question 2 was from Councillor Leo Madden

"Does the Leader agree that, given that the two LA-run energy companies viz., Robin Hood Energy and Bristol Energy, have cost their Councils £MMs and have now been sold on with massive losses to their respective taxpayers, this Council took the right decision in not pursuing the setting-up of Victory Energy Services Limited (VESL) here?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Leader of the Council Councillor Vernon-Jackson.

Following a short debate it was

Proposed by Councillor Terry Norton
Seconded by Councillor Donna Jones

To suspend Standing Orders so as to extend the time allowed for questions by 30 minutes to conclude at 9.05 pm.

This was agreed by assent.

Question 3 was from Councillor Tom Coles

"Can the Leader of the Council confirm whether any arrangements have been made for Covid-secure Remembrance ceremonies in the city?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Leader of the Council Councillor Vernon-Jackson

Question 4 was from Councillor Linda Symes

Did the Leader of the Council take account of objections from local residents over parking and other matters when deciding to pursue the Brewery House development scheme?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Leader of the Council Councillor Vernon-Jackson

The extended time allowed for questions expired before the remaining 3 questions could be put and so in accordance with Standing Order 17(h) written replies would be circulated to members.

16 13 October 2020

The Lord Mayor thanked members and officers for their virtual attendance at the meeting and wished everyone goodnight.

The meeting concluded at 9.05 pm.

Lord Mayor