

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Friday 28 July 2023 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor Roger Phillips (chairperson)
Councillor Stef Simmons (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: Polly Andrews, Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Graham Biggs, Dave Boulter, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Ellie Chowns, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Pauline Crockett, Clare Davies, Barry Durkin, Mark Dykes, Toni Fagan, Carole Gandy, Catherine Gennard, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Helen Heathfield, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Dan Hurcomb, Terry James, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, Nick Mason, Bob Matthews, Ed O'Driscoll, Aubrey Oliver, Rob Owens, Justine Peberdy, Dan Powell, Philip Price, Ben Proctor, Adam Spencer, Louis Stark, Pete Stoddart, John Stone, Elissa Swinglehurst, Richard Thomas, Kevin Tillet, Diana Toynbee, Allan Williams, Rob Williams and Mark Woodall

Officers: Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer and Director of Governance and Law

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Polly Andrews, Dave Davies, Elizabeth Foxton and Ivan Powell.

11. TRIBUTES TO COUNCILLOR PETER JINMAN

Council stood in silence in memory of Councillor Peter Jinman.

The Group Leaders paid tribute to Councillor Jinman and the significant contribution he had made to Herefordshire Council and his local ward of Golden Valley South. Councillor Jinman was respected widely throughout the council and the local community. He brought a rational and considered approach to matters and warmth and good humour in all his interactions with members, officers and local residents.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13. MINUTES

The Chairman outlined a correction to the minutes of the previous meeting to correct the use of the term *Chairman* to *Chairperson* under paragraphs 5 and 8.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the corrections as outlined above, the minutes of the meeting 19 May 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council noted the Chairman's and Chief Executive's announcements as printed in the agenda papers.

15. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 5 - 8)

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 1.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (Pages 9 - 10)

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with supplementary questions asked at the meeting and their answers, is attached to the Minutes at Appendix 2.

17. LEADER'S REPORT

Council received and noted the Leader's report which provided an update on the work of the Cabinet since the annual meeting of Council on 19 May 2023.

Council questioned the Leader on those topics contained in the report and the following actions were raised:

- To provide a written response to a question requesting updates on the motions concerning Herefordshire's Rivers, including: Water Protection Zone for River Wye System; Cabinet Commission on Phosphates; and River Wye bylaws; and
- To review the submission of recommendations concerning the Local Plan from the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet and to consider an executive response.

18. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Motion 1 – County Athletics Track

Councillor Jim Kenyon proposed the motion.

Councillor Rob Williams seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion.

In summary, there was widespread support for the motion and the contribution the facility would make to the health and wellbeing of local residents and the promotion of participation in sport. There was concern expressed regarding long term maintenance of the facility, following repair, and the potential precedent that the Council would set for other local fundraising efforts seeking contributions towards projects.

Councillor Kenyon closed the debate.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried by a simple majority.

RESOLVED – that:

This Council asks the cabinet to reconsider the decision made by council back in February, at the budget meeting, regarding funding for the County Athletics Track in Hereford. Since that meeting they have attracted additional funding from the

levelling up government fund and the local community following the initial pump prime funding from Hereford City council of £70k the short fall for the project to be fully funded is £70k the total project cost is £450k.

Motion 2 – Climate and Ecological Emergency

Councillor Ellie Chowns proposed the motion.

Councillor Liz Harvey seconded the motion.

Council debated the motion.

In summary, there was considerable support for the motion and the importance of accelerating efforts locally to address climate change and move towards net zero. Evidence of the impact of the climate change locally was raised including the increase in the incidence and severity of flooding. It was raised that the motion should not create an impediment to growth and development in the county.

Councillor Chowns close the debate.

The motion was put to the recorded vote and was carried unanimously.

FOR (48) - Councillors: Polly Andrews, Bruce Baker, Jenny Bartlett, Chris Bartrum, Graham Biggs, Dave Boulter, Harry Bramer, Jacqui Carwardine, Ellie Chowns, Simeon Cole, Frank Cornthwaite, Pauline Crockett, Clare Davies, Barry Durkin, Mark Dykes, Toni Fagan, Carole Gandy, Catherine Gennard, Peter Hamblin, Liz Harvey, Helen Heathfield, Robert Highfield, David Hitchiner, Dan Hurcomb, Terry James, Jim Kenyon, Jonathan Lester, Nick Mason, Bob Matthews, Ed O'Driscoll, Aubrey Oliver, Rob Owens, Justine Peberdy, Dan Powell, Philip Price, Ben Proctor, Adam Spencer, Louis Stark, Pete Stoddart, John Stone, Elissa Swinglehurst, Richard Thomas, Kevin Tillett, Diana Toynbee, Allan Williams, Rob Williams and Mark Woodall

AGAINST (0)

ABSTAIN (0)

RESOLVED – that:

In March 2019 Herefordshire Council unanimously passed a motion recognising the climate emergency. This was updated in December 2020 to include recognition of the ecological emergency.

Since that time the scale of the challenge has become greater, and the need for action more urgent. Climate change is driving extreme weather such as heatwaves that cost lives. Wildlife is under extreme pressure, and species loss is accelerating.

Here in Herefordshire we can see the effects of the climate and ecological emergency very clearly at local level. Climate change contributed to the unprecedented flooding in February 2020 that caused immense damage and disruption. Pollution has caused a collapse in biodiversity in our precious Rivers Lugg and Wye, to the great concern of local residents, as well as impacting on our county's reputation and economy.

This motion therefore offers members the opportunity to renew Herefordshire Council's commitment to taking action to tackle the climate and ecological emergency.

Motion

That this Council resolves to declare its recognition of the climate and ecological emergency, and calls on the executive to:

- a) Integrate consideration of climate mitigation and adaptation, and nature recovery, into all council decision-making; and ensure that all decisions are compatible with the goal of a zero-carbon, nature-rich Herefordshire by 2030;**
- b) Commit to further accelerating reduction of the council's own carbon footprint towards the target of net zero by 2030, including taking every opportunity to reduce use of fossil fuels;**
- c) Commit to taking every opportunity to improve wildlife protection and better management of land for nature, including on council-owned land;**
- d) Support and strengthen action with partners towards the goal of a zero-carbon, nature-rich Herefordshire by 2030, including through the Herefordshire Climate and Nature Partnership Board;**
- e) Provide the necessary resources for officers to deliver on the council's carbon reduction and nature protection commitments, and to develop evidence based indicators to enable the council to monitor and report annually on the county's position.**

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

Chairperson

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mr McGeown, Weobley	Will a Printed Copy of Draft City Masterplan be provided to all Herefordshire households in advance of it being put for consultation and adoption?	Cabinet member transport and infrastructure
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Hereford City Masterplan is currently being reviewed to ensure that is aligned with this administration’s Policy Direction. Following this review the document will be reconsidered by Cabinet prior to formal consultation. The consultation will include printed copies being made available in Libraries and Community venues across the County. A short URL link to the digital document will also be available to ensure the document can be easily accessed digitally in line with the Councils Digital Strategy 2018-23.</p>			
<p>Supplementary Question:</p> <p>Would printed copies of draft masterplan be available to Parish Councillors, for example would the parish clerk be able to formally ask that Dilwyn Parish Council obtain 12 printed copies (13 if the clerk can also have one). These would aid the councillors “in depth discussion in advance of consultation”. Also and possibly more significant, these printed copies could be made available to Dilwyn residents so they can become fully informed. Say placed in the borrowed book corner in St Mary’s Church, The Crown community hub, village hall etc. This would help Dilwynners to raise relevant concerns.</p> <p>Also as a simple resident/householder I have minor vision impairment and find hard printed copy easier than on screen documents. Would I be able to formally ask to be provided with a printed copy from say “Information Governance Team, Herefordshire Council”, so that like the councillors, it will enable me to have better accessibility and fuller understanding. I can then be better prepared when the Draft Masterplan is put for consultation.</p>			
<p>Response to supplementary question from Cabinet member transport and infrastructure:</p> <p>As part of the consultation the needs of all different consultees across the county will be considered. The consultation will be conducted largely on line however hard copies of the consultation documents will be available in libraries and where requests for hardcopies are received the council will engage with those members of the public to attempt to address their needs and requirements.</p>			
PQ 2	Ms Reid, Hereford	<p>The Chief Executive’s Announcement and the Leader’s Report mentioned the partnership with Leeds City Council to improve Herefordshire Children’s Services. The Leeds Family Valued approach uses “restorative and relational practice”. When recently interviewed (BBC H&W), the Cabinet member explained this means “working with families and not doing to [families]” and mentioned Family Group Conferences (FGCs).</p> <p>Apart from FGCs, how will the council work with and build trust with families (please include dates)?</p>	<p>Cabinet member children and young people</p> <p>(The Leader has provided the response)</p>

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Excluding FGCs, possibilities include:

- Establishing a group of families with varied experience of Children's Services (eg care proceedings, children 'in need', children in care) to consult with
- Suggesting a families co-optee on the Improvement Board
- Satisfactorily dealing with complaints
- Satisfactorily answering public questions and supplementary questions per the Constitution especially to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee (CYPSC)
- Representative of Families co-optee on the CYPSC (4.5.7, Constitution)

Response:

The move towards a more restorative and relational approach has started and we are excited that the Leeds Relational Practice Centre has committed to support us over the next few years with our development journey. There is not a distinct list of key dates and tasks but rather an embrace of the approach of working *with* families which should permeate all of our actions in time.

Answering on behalf of Councillor Ivan Powell today I am aware that the service is developing proposals to speak with families about setting up a consultative group which will be shared with Councillor Powell and that additional resources have been put into being better able to respond to and resolve complaints. A question about responding to public questions and supplementary questions was answered at the meeting of the children and young people scrutiny committee last week as was the matter of the appointment of co-optees which is a matter for that committee. I shall however pass on the suggestions contained in the question to Councillor Ivan Powell.

Supplementary question:

Public questions have often not been fully answered, answered late or unanswered. For example, four public questions were submitted to the February children's scrutiny committee meeting but none was answered before the meeting. At the next children's scrutiny committee meeting, this month, six public questions were submitted. All six questioners are dissatisfied with the responses to their public questions and/or supplementary questions including the former Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the committee. The explanation for rejecting my supplementary question was that it repeated the answered public question about co-optees. The response would have answered my public question for any other scrutiny committee.

In future, will public questions and supplementary questions be satisfactorily answered and per the Constitution?

Response to supplementary question from the Leader:

Public and supplementary questions were vital to the running council and it was important that the process for the answering of questions operated effectively and did not malfunction. Every effort would be made to ensure that the problems affecting the questions to the February meeting of the children and young people scrutiny committee did not happen again. Within the rules for public questions there was the potential for questions and supplementary questions to be rejected if they did not meet the criteria. The council should strive to answer questions in line with the services it provides and members of the public should feel that the ability to ask questions adds to the value of the running of the council.

Agenda item no. 6 - Questions from members of the Council

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
MQ 1	Councillor Oliver, Saxon Gate	<p>In the 23/24 budget signed off by the Council there was a commitment to build 2,500 homes for social housing over 10 years.</p> <p>How many of these 2,500 homes will be built in the years to 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025? How many homes are likely to be built in the next 4 years?</p> <p>What was the total number of new houses built in Herefordshire in the year to 31 March 2023?</p> <p>How many house are there for which outline planning or full planning has been granted that still remain to be built?</p>	Cabinet member Economy and Growth
<p>Response:</p> <p>In the 23/24 budget signed off by the Council there was a commitment to build 2,500 homes for social housing over 10 years.</p> <p>As part of the Capital Strategy presented by the previous administration to Council in February, it stated –</p> <p>Cabinet have an ambition to create 2,500 new social and affordable homes over the next 10 years; the council intends to respond to this challenge by progressing plans to invest in developing additional affordable housing stock and retaining it in public ownership.</p> <p>How many of these 2,500 homes will be built in the years to 31 March 2024 and 31 March 2025?</p> <p>All affordable housing predicted to be delivered in the County is 386 Affordable Rent = 133 Social Rent = 46 Shared Ownership = 89 Rent to Buy = 4 114 units to be confirmed</p> <p>How many homes are likely to be built in the next 4 years?</p> <p>All affordable housing predicted to be delivered over the next 4 years is 1274. Affordable Rent = 397 Social Rent = 180 Shared Equity = 4 First Homes = 10 Shared Ownership = 202</p>			

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LCM/Discounted = 18

Rent to buy = 8

455 to be confirmed

What was the total number of new houses built in Herefordshire in the year to 31 March 2023?

Monitoring survey data being used for the annual 5 year supply reporting indicates that there have been 704 units completed (net) in the year 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

How many house are there for which outline planning or full planning has been granted that still remain to be built?

Unbuilt commitments (net) with full permission, together with outline permissioned units at 31st March 2023 totals 4675. It should be added that this figure may be subject to variation as the 5 year supply report is still being finalised.

NB Net refers to the number of new units built less any demolitions.

Supplementary Question :

I welcome the announcement that 1,274 units will be built within 4 years, are all these units to be built by the Council? How many will be built in Hereford City? As regards the 4,675 with outline planning permission I assume most of these are on the land banks of private housing developers. A large developer had outline permission for 1,000 homes at Rotherwas which has been in place for about 10 years without a single home being built. Can the council persuade them to part with a portion of the land to enable social housing to be built where the jobs are on Rotherwas?

Response to supplementary question from Cabinet Member Economy and Growth:

A written response would be provided and an offer to meet and discuss the issues was raised.

Response to supplementary question provided on 9 August:

All will be built by private developers and registered providers, however the affordable housing will be negotiated by Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Team Strategic Housing.

From April 2023 to March 2026 it is predicted that 437 affordable housing properties and an 80 unit extra care scheme will be built in Hereford totalling 517.

Discussions with the developer are currently taking place with regards to the site in Rotherwas. There is the potential to deliver approximately 540 homes of which 35% would be negotiated as affordable housing, with a mixture of accommodation for general needs and vulnerable client groups.