

Minutes of the meeting of Council held at Council Chamber, The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Friday 8 March 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor DB Wilcox (chairman)
Councillor PJ Edwards (vice-chairperson)

Councillors: SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, E Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, PGH Cutter, BA Durkin, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, RL Mayo, MT McEvelly, PD Newman OBE, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington and SD Williams

Officers: Chris Baird, Richard Ball, Annie Brookes, John Coleman, Matthew Evans, Andrew Lovegrove, Alistair Neill, Stephen Vickers and Claire Ward

50. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman opened the meeting and proposed a reordering of the items on the agenda for the meeting, to consider the climate emergency motion following the council tax setting report. The two further motions would then be debated and determined. Council agreed the reordering of the agenda.

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors DW Greenow, J Hardwick, DG Harlow, EL Holton, SM Michael, AR Round and LC Tawn.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The monitoring officer confirmed that those members liable to pay council tax did not have a disclosable pecuniary interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February are confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

A petition concerning the climate emergency was handed to Councillor Price.

The Chairman outlined the following during his announcements:

- Thanks were offered to the M.E.P Anthea McIntyre for the showcasing of Herefordshire at the European Parliament. Hereford College of Art was also commended for its involvement in providing the exhibition in Brussels;
- The unveiling of the memorial to the munitions workers at the Hereford Archives and Records Centre (HARC) on the afternoon of 8 March;
- The civic service on care and caring takes place on 17 March in the Cathedral; and
- A letter from the SAS which offered the Chairman to include the blazing sword emblem of the regiment on his chain of office.

55. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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.

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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.

57. COUNCIL TAX SETTING

The report was introduced by the deputy leader who moved the recommendations contained in the supplement. The meeting was referred to the supplement which contained the precept agreed by Hereford City Council. All precepting authorities had indicated their precepts which formed part of the council tax setting decision for the Council.

The Leader seconded the recommendations and explained that a comprehensive debate at the previous meeting of Council had set the budget.

The points below were raised in the debate which followed:

- The police and crime commissioner's precept had been scrutinised by a working group of the police and crime panel. A member explained that the precept increase of 9.94% had been set to recruit additional police officers and a commitment had been made by the commissioner to limit the precept increase for the following year to 3%;
- A member felt that the proposed police officer recruitment would not compensate for the reduction in the number of officers since the introduction of police and crime commissioners and that the precept of the commissioner was evidence of ineffective scrutiny;
- There was concern that precept increases were above the rate of inflation and this was attributable to significant cuts in central government funding for Herefordshire Council since 2010. *The deputy leader explained that precept increases over the last 10 years fell between the RPI and CPI indicators of inflation. It was acknowledged that the increase in the precept was greater than desired but it was not out of step with increases in other areas;*
- There was concern about the variation in the level of precepts agreed by parish councils in the county. It was considered whether large increases could be attributed to the delegation of responsibilities from the council. It was felt that an analysis of the variation and those reasons for it should be undertaken to

determine if there were strategies parish councils could employ, such as sharing services, which could help in the delivery of local services.

- It was noted that the council tax setting report was a technical exercise which the Council was required to undertake annually.

The recommendations in the supplement were put to the record vote and carried by 42 votes in favour and 1 against.

For (42): SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, EE Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, MT McEvilly, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (1) D Summers.

Abstentions (0)

58. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

The Chairman outlined a correction to the title of Councillor AJW Power's motion. The motion should have been titled 'climate emergency' in the report.

Motion 1 – Climate Emergency

Councillor AJW Powers outlined an alteration to the motion to replace the words '*its own*' with '*this council's*' in recommendation a).

The seconder and Council agreed to the alteration and to debate the altered motion.

In moving the motion Councillor AJW Powers made the following points:

- Councillors often look at the local picture without considering the bigger picture. The perception that nothing could be done was lazy.
- The motion called on Herefordshire Council to take the lead with partners to make a change; to set targets and allocate resources to address the climate emergency;
- 30 other areas and cities had passed motions to declare a climate emergency and commit to take actions in response to the climate emergency;
- The large turnout at the meeting and the involvement of students and young people in the extinction rebellion was inspiring. The motion focused on the future of all young people and it was important that the younger generation showed the council what it must do to respond to the climate emergency.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- The installation of LED streetlights in Herefordshire was raised and the saving of a significant level of carbon over 10 years. The council would publish a list of those measures it had undertaken and proposals for the future.
- It was important that cross-party work was undertaken on actions and that the public was involved. It was acknowledged that some of the actions would result in

unpopular decisions which would have to be understood in the context of responding to the climate emergency.

- It was important that all members of the community and young people were involved in determining future actions of the council.
- The motion contained details of what would be done going forward but the council had established plans over the previous 12 years. Meetings of local bodies regularly discussed sustainability and had items on agendas at meetings.
- Through planning policies the council needed to ensure that construction in the county meets the highest standard, including the installation of insulation.
- It was commented that prior to 2011 the relevant committee at the council received regular reports on progress with carbon reduction actions being taken.
- Work needed to be undertaken on collecting rainfall and electricity generation and such notions needed to be proposed to house builders.
- The rubbish evident in hedgerows in Herefordshire was raised.
- The motion was a signal of intent which would ensure that the council considered the climate emergency in all work that it undertook and decisions it made.
- The Wye Valley AONB regularly considered environmental issues including Ash die back which was caused by climate change.
- The motion would provide an overarching commitment to carbon reduction. All actions of the council should be informed by a priority to reduce carbon emissions.
- The need to work in partnership with parish councils was raised particularly on those functions which had been delegated from the council.

Councillor PD Price proposed an amendment to the motion to add an additional paragraph as follows – *f) The council requests the executive to arrange a full day interactive seminar for all councillors this year to be briefed on and discuss the options that might be open to Herefordshire Council to expedite its carbon footprint reduction aspiration and improve further the natural environment of Herefordshire.*

The amendment was seconded by Councillor MT McEvilly.

Councillor AJP Powers and Councillor PP Marsh accepted the amendment subject to the wording '*as soon as possible*' replacing the words '*this year*'. This change was acceptable to the proposer and seconder of the amendment and was therefore incorporated into the original motion and became the substantive motion.

The following principal points were raised in the debate on the substantive motion:

- It was noted that there was consensus across the Council for the motion;
- It was important that all members reflected on their personal carbon footprints and as individuals and community leaders set an example.
- Concern was raised regarding the number of bio digesters and maize which was grown as a feed crop. The growth of maize was felt to contribute to soil erosion in the county.
- The Council needed to show leadership and it was important that developers were encouraged to build environmentally friendly homes and that planning policies included the requirement to include the installation of charging points for electric cars.
- The staggering of school drop off and pick-up times would help ease congestion in Herefordshire.
- In the new Council term, following the elections, a full audit of what the Council has achieved was needed to assess what had been accomplished and what more was required.

- The proposed western bypass as a method of growing the economy of Herefordshire was a 19th century solution. In order to address the impact of fossil fuels, the building of new roads was counter-productive.
- Climate change was a worrying trend and a significant threat.
- Electric charging points installed by the council needed to be properly maintained and those that were currently not working required repair.
- The 'stop the drop' and the 'Great Herefordshire Spring Clean' were raised and the work that was going on with parish council to improve the county.
- The amendment was supported and would ensure that new members were engaged in the work being undertaken and would understand the issues. A better forum was required for members to understand and discuss the issues.
- There was an urgent need for the council to address carbon reduction.
- In response to the public questions there was concern that the council's primary priority was on economic growth but there was not sufficient understanding as to how the economic model would align with measures to address the climate emergency.

In seconding the motion Councillor PP Marsh made the following points:

- The legacy of this Council should be to address climate change.
- The next steps needed to be defined and how the council would work with businesses, the voluntary sector and local communities.
- There was common ground for the motion across the chamber.
- The actions required in response to the motion would be a long haul and would require a re-imagining and re-engineering of the delivery of services. Innovation and ingenuity were important and work with the new university could help determine actions the council could take.
- The use of grants and loans should be assessed and how they could be used to advance the principles of the motion.

In closing the debate Councillor AJW Powers explained that action needed to be taken now; there was no longer any room for delay. There may be additional costs to the council in addressing the climate emergency but such investment would be in response to the concerns of the public.

Councillor AJW Powers proposed a recorded vote which was supported by more than eight members of the Council.

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

For (43): SP Anderson, PA Andrews, BA Baker, JM Bartlett, WLS Bowen, TL Bowes, H Bramer, CR Butler, ACR Chappell, EE Chowns, MJK Cooper, PE Crockett, P Cutter, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, CA Gandy, KS Guthrie, EPJ Harvey, TM James, PC Jinman, AW Johnson, JF Johnson, JLV Kenyon, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, PP Marsh, RI Matthews, MT McEvilly, PD Newman, FM Norman, CA North, RJ Phillips, AJW Powers, PD Price, P Rone, A Seldon, NE Shaw, J Stone, D Summers, EJ Swinglehurst, A Warmington, DB Wilcox, SD Williams.

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED: that –

This Council declares its recognition of the climate emergency and calls on the executive to:

- a) **Commit to an accelerated reduction of the Council's carbon emissions, with the aspirations to be carbon neutral by 2030; and to change its energy supply to 100% renewable source;**
- b) **Produce a successor to the current Carbon Management Plan (2019-2023) within the early months of the new Council;**
- c) **Work with partners to produce an action plan, covering all relevant council strategies, and to submit this plan via Scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2019;**
- d) **Call upon our 'Re-Energise' partners to match or better the council's commitment; to publicise their response and to lead on working with the public to promote and encourage carbon reduction in all aspects of the county's life;**
- e) **Provide the necessary resource for officers to deliver on the council's carbon reduction commitments, and to monitor and report annually on the county position; and**
- f) **The council requests the executive to arrange a full day interactive seminar for all councillors as soon as possible to be briefed on and discuss the options that might be open to Herefordshire Council to expedite its carbon footprint reduction aspiration and improve further the natural environment of Herefordshire.**

There was an adjournment at 12.21 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 12.38 p.m.

Motion 2 - Minister for Borderlands

Council considered a motion concerning a minister for borderlands.

In moving the motion Councillor EPJ Harvey made the following points:

- Herefordshire was a county which lived on the edge of the border with Wales.
- Devolution of powers had resulted in a number of borderland issues but these were not acknowledged in parliament or the regional assembly.
- There were different education and health arrangements on either side of the Welsh border. Access for people in the West of the county to education in Wales was hampered. Access to health facilities in Herefordshire came from Wales but no additional funding was available.
- Legal and customary differences compromised the establishment of partnership and joint arrangements with authorities and providers in Wales. Access to internal investment was also problematic.
- Brexit was likely to exacerbate borderland issues.
- The motion sought to encourage all authorities on the border to investigate ways of working with Welsh partners and to lobby for greater recognition of the issues.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- A minister for borderlands could be an advantage for Herefordshire to highlight the positive contributions made by the county.
- It was noted that farmers bought and sold produce across the Welsh border.
- A member raised the prospect of the reconstitution of the Council of Marches.
- A member was concerned that the motion did not make reference to the Welsh Assembly or the memorandum of understanding that existed. It was important

that work with the Welsh Assembly was undertaken to address cross-border issues.

- Some members were concerned that the proposal for a minister for borderlands would introduce an additional layer of bureaucracy. Work across the border already took place with the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and arrangements currently in place were felt to be sufficient to manage cross-border working.
- Cross-border working took place at a local level and the functioning of the AONB was presented as evidence of partnership arrangements.
- Some members referred to a gap in representation of border communities which a minister for borderlands would address. Regional arrangements in the West Midlands were felt to be dominated by large urban areas such as Birmingham.
- The motion represented an interesting proposal which should be investigated and encouraged.

In seconding the motion Councillor A Seldon made the following points:

- The distinctions between the systems and arrangements on either side of the border were acknowledged. The respective healthcare systems were posed as an example.
- It was important that a minister in government had strategic oversight of the issues affecting border communities;
- The proposals would not inhibit or hinder the functioning of other authorities or arrangements.
- The proposal would enhance cross-border opportunities and Herefordshire would be used as a point of access for the border.
- It was recognised that greater liaison was required on both sides of the border which the proposal in the motion would help to facilitate.

In closing the debate Councillor EPJ Harvey explained that the motion did not propose significant change but asked for recognition that there were border issues and press for a minister for borderlands to advocate and lobby on behalf of borderland communities. Recognition of borderland concerns started in Northumberland with issues across the border to Scotland. The motion before Council would encourage local authorities on both sides of the Welsh border to recognise cross border issues.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council:

- recognises that local authorities located immediately adjacent to the national borders for England, Wales and Scotland face particular challenges associated with devolution, region initiatives, planning cross-border health, education, public transport, infrastructure investment, economic growth.

- warmly congratulates the northern communities submitting their bids to the recently announced 'Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal', covering the cross-border local authority areas of Northumberland County Council, Scottish Borders Council, Cumbria County Council, Carlisle City Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

- supports the principle of proposing the appointment of a 'Minister for Borderlands'; and resolves to join Northumberland County Council in writing to Her Majesty's Government, namely the First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister), the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and the

Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales to support a request the creation of such a position in government.

- resolves to encourage all borderland council's on the England-Wales border to add their support to this Ministerial appointment and to lobby the LGA for its support to this request, through its recently created 'People and Places Board'.

Motion 3 – Eastern River Crossing

Councillor JLV Kenyon introduced an alteration to his motion and requested that the altered motion below was discussed and determined by Council:

This council asks the executive to consider including in the forthcoming core strategy review a consideration of options for a route corridor for a full city ring road for Hereford to include an Eastern city bridge.

The seconder and Council agreed to the alteration and to debate the altered motion.

In moving the motion Councillor JLV Kenyon made the following points:

- A full city ring road would be an excellent opportunity for cycling in the city. A ring road could prioritise cycling, electric charging points and electric buses.
- Currently there were no protected routes around the city. The land on which an Eastern route could run had been subject to previous planning applications.
- There was a possibility of an Eastern route that was built by developers.
- The proposal of an additional bridge to the East of Hereford had the support of the local MP Jesse Norman as a method of reducing congestion in the city.

In seconding the motion Councillor SD Williams explained that he was supportive of methods to improve transport in Hereford.

The following principal points were raised by members in the debate:

- A member explained that support had been expressed for an Eastern river crossing had been expressed at consultation events for the Hereford Area Plan (HAP). The HAP should consider approaches to Hereford from either side of the city.
- A member stated that businesses were reluctant to move to Hereford because of congestion; it was important to keep options open and protect an Eastern route to alleviate congestion.
- A member considered the motion to be contrary to the earlier motion approved by Council to declare a climate emergency; alternative forms of sustainable transport should be investigated rather than proposals for new roads.

In closing the debate Councillor JLV Kenyon highlighted the support from the Green party for a Leominster bypass.

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

RESOLVED: That – this council asks the executive to consider including in the forthcoming core strategy review a consideration of options for a route corridor for a full city ring road for Hereford to include an Eastern city bridge.

59. LEADER'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

The Leader introduced his report and received the following question:

- The prospect of the inclusion of a raised crossing on the Belmont side of Haywood Lane in the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) was proposed which would avoid the need to close the lane during works at a later date. *The Leader confirmed that a written response would be provided.*

The Leader announced that the Council had completed the purchase of the Royal National College for the Blind in College Road, Hereford. The campus would continue to be used as a centre of excellence and offered flexible space. The purchase represented the acquisition of a strategic asset in line with the corporate objectives of the Council. It supported further and higher education in Herefordshire.

The Leader continued to receive questions below:

- An update on the work of the executive to implement sustainable principles into the development partnership was requested. *The Leader confirmed that an update would be provided in the list of projects and initiatives undertaken by the Council to respond to environmental issues.*
- The review of car parking concessions was welcome in principle, to investigate cheaper parking at times of the day to improve footfall, but there had been questionable consultation and decision-making and no obvious means of measuring its success. Assurance was sought that there would be a proper level of planning, consultation and measures for success in future. *The Leader did not accept the premise that there had been problems with the decision taken. The review had sought to find best policies for the council and consultations were often criticised. The review had been a positive move and the criticism was difficult to understand.*
- Assurance was sought that the minerals and waste plan consultation would take account of the climate emergency and consider anaerobic digestion and crops for biomass. *The Leader confirmed that any review undertaken would take account of the policies and priorities of the Council.*
- A member felt that the decision, SWTP - southern link road was cover for the allocation of £1million to the SWTP at the end of the financial year without proper decision-making and against the constitution. Assurance was sought that the decision would be properly dealt with through the constitution and with a proper cabinet member key decision. *The Leader explained that written clarification on the matter would be provided.*
- The rebuilding of Peterchurch School was raised and the requirement for similar improvements at Kingsland School. *The Leader explained that as the cabinet member for children and young people he launched the capital investment strategy which was working to improve educational facilities in Herefordshire.*

60. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND PROGRAMME OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF COUNCIL 2019/20

In announcing that the next meeting of Council would take place on 24 May 2019, following the elections, the Chairman thanked all the retiring councillors for the work they had done for the County during their time as councillors.

Council agreed meeting dates for the forthcoming municipal year as below:

12 July 2019
11 October 2019

14 February 2020
6 March 2020
22 May 2020

The meeting ended at 1.45 pm

Chairman