

COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON

TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024

Councillors Present: Antony Amirtharaj, Phil Barnett, Dominic Boeck, Jeff Brooks, Nick Carter, Heather Codling, Martin Colston, Jeremy Cottam (Chairman), Carlyne Culver, Paul Dick, Billy Drummond (Vice-Chairman), Denise Gaines, Stuart Gourley, Clive Hooker, Owen Jeffery, Paul Kander, Janine Lewis, Ross Mackinnon, David Marsh, Geoff Mayes, Biyi Oloko, Justin Pemberton, Vicky Poole, Christopher Read, Matt Shakespeare, Richard Somner, Stephanie Steevenson, Joanne Stewart, Louise Sturgess, Clive Taylor, Tony Vickers and Howard Woollaston

Councillors Present on Zoom: Adrian Abbs

Also Present: Nigel Lynn (Chief Executive), Joseph Holmes (Executive Director - Resources), Clare Lawrence (Executive Director - Place), AnnMarie Dodds (Executive Director - Children and Family Services), Stephen Chard (Democratic Services Manager), Jake Carpenter (Group Executive (Cons)), Nicola Thomas (Deputy Monitoring Officer), Benjamin Ryan (Democratic Services Officer) and Honorary Alderman Tony Linden

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Dennis Benneyworth, Councillor Patrick Clark, Councillor Iain Cottingham, Councillor Laura Coyle, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Nigel Foot, Councillor Jane Langford, Councillor Alan Macro, Councillor Erik Pattenden, Councillor Martha Vickers, Honorary Alderman Paul Bryant, Honorary Alderman Keith Chopping, Honorary Alderwoman Hilary Cole, Honorary Alderman Adrian Edwards, Honorary Alderman Graham Jones, Honorary Alderman Rick Jones, Honorary Alderwoman Mollie Lock, Honorary Alderman Gordon Lundie, Honorary Alderman Graham Pask, Honorary Alderman Andrew Rowles and Honorary Alderwoman Emma Webster

PART I

67. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Heather Codling declared an interest in Agenda Items 4 and 5 by virtue of the fact that she was Ward Member for both Cold Ash and Hermitage, she was also a Parish Councillor and resident of Cold Ash, however she had no direct influence on the Neighbourhood Development Plan. She therefore reported that, as her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Paul Dick declared an interest in Agenda Items 4 and 5 by virtue of the fact that he was Ward Member for both Cold Ash and Hermitage, he added that he was supportive of both plans. He therefore reported that, as his interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, he determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

68. Report by the Returning Officer on the Compulsory Polling District and Polling Place Review (C4439)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 3) which sought Council approval for the parliamentary polling districts and polling places within West Berkshire.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Stuart Gourley:

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That the Council:

“in response to the Council's public consultation on the review of polling districts and polling places, is asked to approve the recommendations set out in Appendix A.

Agree that the existing polling districts remain unchanged with the following exceptions:

- Polling places in polling districts Lambourn 2 (Lambourn Memorial Hall), Newbury 6/Greenham 3 (Newbury Rugby Club), Thatcham 3 (Thatcham Memorial Hall), Thatcham 7 and Thatcham 8 (Moorside Centre), and Purley-on-Thames (Purley Memorial Hall) are now subject to further review and will be agreed by the Returning Officer in time for elections to be held in spring 2024.

Agree that the Returning Officer maintains delegated authority to agree any further changes to polling places”.

Councillor Brooks recommended approval of the recommendations.

Councillor Owen Jeffery described the situation within Colthrop and Crookham where some voters needed to travel to their polling station via a level crossing, but access was prevented when the level crossing gates were closed. Constituents were seeking an additional polling station to overcome this issue and Councillor Jeffery requested that this be considered prior to the General Election. He suggested that a caravan would be suitable.

The Chairman stated that this would be looked into by officers.

Councillor Tony Vickers was pleased to note that a more preferable location had been identified for the polling station in West Woodhay.

He was also pleased to note that use of the Wash Common Rugby Club as a polling station was being reviewed. Councillor Vickers felt that the Phoenix Centre would be more suitable.

Councillor David Marsh agreed that the Phoenix Centre was a better option. Access to the Wash Common Rugby Club was difficult for pedestrians.

Councillor Nick Carter highlighted comments he had received in relation to the Stratfield Mortimer polling station. There had been issues with queuing and there were no toilets. That said, the location was suitable. He felt these were matters for future consideration.

Councillor Phil Barnett explained that within the Newbury Greenham Ward, the polling station within Greenham had relocated to the West Berkshire Bowls Club. While it was a good location, it was some distance for those living in the south of the Ward. He requested that consideration be given to an alternative polling station.

Councillor Gourley, in seconding the report, stated that he was pleased to note the recommendations to review the provision in certain areas of the District.

Councillor Brooks stated that the comments raised by Members would be taken on board. He added, subject to the Motion being approved, that the Returning Officer would hold delegated authority to agree any further changes to polling places.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

69. **Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (C4433)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 4) concerning the Cold Ash Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The NDP had been subject to independent examination and the Examiner had recommended that it proceed to referendum, subject to modification. However, it was for Council to decide if the NDP would progress to referendum.

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MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tony Vickers and seconded by Councillor Heather Codling:

That the Council:

“endorse the Decision Statement on the Cold Ash NDP which concludes that the Cold Ash NDP, with the inclusion of modifications, meets the Basic Conditions.

Because the modified Plan meets the Basic Conditions, it is recommended that:

- (a) The Plan should proceed to referendum;
- (b) Upon a successful ‘yes’ vote at referendum, agreement is sought that the Cold Ash NDP is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire; and
- (c) The authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Cold Ash NDP as set out in Appendices D and E, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.”

Councillor Tony Vickers commended the Parish document. He stated that, subject to approval, the referendum would take place on 2 May 2024 (the date of the Police and Crime Commissioner election).

He reiterated the recommendation that should the vote at referendum be ‘yes’ then the NDP be immediately adopted as part of the West Berkshire Local Plan.

Councillor Vickers noted the hard work of the Parish Council in producing the NDP with the support of Council officers.

Councillor Paul Dick commented on the many years of hard work by the Parish Council and Council officers to produce the NDP. He gave thanks to the Cold Ash Parish Councillors in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman added his thanks to Parish Councillors.

Councillor Nick Carter agreed this was an excellent report. He advised that Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council was one of the first in the area to produce a NDP. He offered support to Cold Ash from Stratfield Mortimer should it be needed.

Councillor Codling added her thanks to the Parish Council for their extensive hard work. Only minor input had been requested by the Examiner and she was hopeful the document would proceed to referendum.

Councillor Tony Vickers encouraged other parishes to consider forming an NDP. This was something West Berkshire Council’s Members could encourage amongst their parishes.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

70. **Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (C4432)**

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 5) concerning the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). The NDP had been subject to independent examination and the Examiner had recommended that it proceed to referendum, subject to modification. However, it was for Council to decide if the NDP would progress to referendum.

MOTION: Proposed by Councillor Tony Vickers and seconded by Councillor Heather Codling:

That the Council:

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“endorse the Decision Statement on the Hermitage NDP which concludes that the Hermitage NDP, with the inclusion of modifications, meets the Basic Conditions.

Because the modified Plan meets the Basic Conditions, it is recommended that:

- (a) The Plan should proceed to referendum;
- (b) Upon a successful ‘yes’ vote at referendum, agreement is sought that the Hermitage NDP is adopted immediately after the votes have been counted so that it becomes part of the development plan for West Berkshire; and
- (c) The authority to make minor alterations and corrections to the Hermitage NDP as set out in Appendices D and E, prior to its proceeding to referendum, be delegated to the Service Lead, Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Community Engagement.”

Councillor Tony Vickers commended this well produced document, a result of much hard work by the Parish Council. Hermitage had grown significantly and so the production of the NDP was important to help control future development in the area.

He was pleased to note the focus on sustainability in both this and the Cold Ash NDP.

Councillor Paul Dick paid tribute to the Hermitage Parish Councillors for their work in producing the NDP. He repeated his thanks to the Council officers for supporting the process.

Councillor Martin Colston was pleased to note the thoughtful consideration given to future development in the area.

Councillor Codling endorsed the recommendations of the report. She added her thanks to the Parish Council.

Councillor Tony Vickers commended the report to Council.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 7.25pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature