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## Council

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**MINUTES** of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 30 July 2025 from 7.00 pm - 10.03 pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth, Lloyd Bowen, Hayden Brawn, Derek Carnell (Deputy Mayor), Ann Cavanagh, Shelley Cheesman, Charles Gibson, Tim Gibson, Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison, Carole Jackson, Mark Last, Peter MacDonald, Peter Marchington, Ben J Martin, Claire Martin, Charlie Miller, Kieran Mishchuk, Lee-Anne Moore, Tom Nundy, Carrie Pollard, Julien Speed, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen, Terry Thompson, Karen Watson (Mayor), Mike Whiting, Tony Winckless and Ashley Wise.

**PRESENT (VIRTUALLY):** Councillors Hannah Perkin, Mark Tucker and Dolley Wooster.

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Billy Attaway, Robin Harris, Jo Millard and Larissa Reed.

**OFFICER PRESENT (VIRTUALLY):** Martyn Cassell.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Lloyd Chapman, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Alex Eyre, James Hunt, Elliott Jayes, Rich Lehmann, Pete Neal, Tara Noe, Chris Palmer, Richard Palmer and Ashley Shiel.

236 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Mayor outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

237 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 14 May 2025 (Minute Nos. 1-15) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

238 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

239 **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor thanked Members for their support since she started her term as Mayor in May 2025 and advised that along with her Deputy Mayor, Councillor Derek Carnell, they had carried out around 30 engagements including the Bobbing in Bloom awards, and the opening of the Sheerness Adventure golf course.

Referring to her first charity event held recently at Shurland Hall, Eastchurch, the Mayor thanked Members for their support.

240 **Questions submitted by the Public**

There were no questions from the public.

241 **Questions submitted by Members**

There were no questions from Members.

**242 Leader's Statement**

The Leader said:

*“Good evening Madam Mayor, one and all.*

*I want to start this evening firstly by affirming this Council’s unerring commitment to the White Ribbon campaign. Having recently received re-accreditation as a White Ribbon organisation, we stand united in our pledge to end male violence against women and girls. This is not just a campaign we support passively, it’s a commitment that shapes our policies, our culture, and the way we engage with our communities. We are working closely with partners, including schools, charities and our own staff, to promote healthy relationships and challenge misogyny wherever it appears and I would encourage you all to sign the pledge to never use, excuse or remain silent about violence against women. Whilst white ribbon day will be held on 25 November this year, the principles of the white ribbon campaign is something that we can all live by overtly every single day by word act or demeanour in our role as community champions.*

*Moving on we recently saw a vibrant and inclusive Pride Month, with events bringing people together in a spirit of joy, solidarity and equality. Pride is not just a celebration it’s a reminder of our responsibility to ensure that everyone, regardless of gender or sexuality, feels safe, seen, and valued in our communities. In particular I want to thank the organisers, volunteers, and participants for making the Swale Pride event in Sheerness so meaningful. I would also like to thank our Mayor and Deputy Mayor for attending the event in their civic role and enduring some of the not so tropical weather that the Sheppey can bring. However I am sickened to have to report that Pixie Polite one of the artists that appeared at the Swale event was subjected to a nasty homophobic attack in London earlier this week. I am sure that I speak for us all in stating that this Council remains firmly committed to LGBTQ+ inclusion and will continue to champion equality in all that we do including condemning acts such as these.*

*Remaining on the Island and reflecting on the lighter side of local life I was delighted to attend the opening of the new Adventure Golf facility at Beachfields, which I am sure will prove a hit with families, residents and visitors of all ages. This facility is part of our wider work to improve leisure and recreation, helping people connect, unwind, and enjoy our outdoor spaces.*

*Just down the road we are Supporting Young Entrepreneurs as work begins to transform the garages at the historic Masters House into dedicated business workshops.*

*This exciting project will see the old garage roofs removed and replaced with three modern, sustainably built ‘makers huts’, complete with kitchenettes and toilets. These new workspaces are designed to give local artists, makers and craftspeople aged 18 to 30 a professional base to launch and grow their businesses.*

*We are working in partnership with national charity Launch It, who are already delivering outstanding mentoring and business support to local young people with the expertise of former councillor Denise Knights. Their presence ensures that these spaces offer more than just a roof, they offer a genuine springboard for ambition, creativity, and local economic growth.*

*Moving to the outdoors we are once again celebrating success with Green Flag Awards for Milton Creek Country Park, Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park, and Faversham*

*Recreation Ground. The awards are testament to the tireless work of our teams and volunteers who care for these spaces in order that they are able to be enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.*

*Faversham Recreation Ground has received the award for the second time, whilst Milton Creek Country Park has now earned the Green Flag for the fourth consecutive year. Remarkably, the Oare Gunpowder Works celebrates its 20th consecutive award and has also achieved the Green Heritage Site Accreditation, supported by Historic England, for the management and promotion of its historic features.*

*Whilst some enjoy the outdoors others just like to sit down and enjoy a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. That's exactly what I did when I officially opened the new Chatty Café in Heather House, an important initiative aimed at tackling loneliness and social isolation within our community. Sometimes the simplest ideas make the biggest difference, a warm drink, a friendly face, and a chance to talk. This space provides just that, helping people reconnect and feel part of something. My thanks go to the teams and volunteers involved in bringing this to life.*

*Talking of bringing things to life I turn to local health services, I'm delighted to report that following the demise of the ageing x ray machine at Sittingbourne Memorial a brand-new X-ray machine has now been purchased an investment which is a significant step forward in improving diagnostic capacity and bringing services closer to home for our residents again. We know how important accessible healthcare is, and this development demonstrates that it is not all bad news for healthcare in Swale.*

*Finally before I close, I want to offer my congratulations to the Lionesses on their historic victory in the UEFA Women's Euro Championship. Their performance on the pitch was nothing short of inspirational, and their success is a milestone not just for women's football, but for sport and gender equality in this country. They've made the nation proud and inspired a generation of young players, many of whom live and play right here in Swale.*

*From supporting safety and inclusion, to investing in entrepreneurship, and celebrating sport and our community, we are showing what it means to be a borough that's proud and compassionate.*

*My sincere thanks to everyone, officers, partners, volunteers, residents and members who are helping deliver on this shared vision.*

*Thank you."*

In response, the Leader of the Conservative group thanked the Leader for his statement. He acknowledged the success of the Lionesses in the Women's Football European Cup and reminded Members that the Women's Rugby World Cup would be starting soon. Referring to the Leader's comments on the NHS, the Leader of the Conservative Group spoke of the temporary closure of the Faversham Cottage Hospital. The Leader of the Conservative Group sent his condolences to the family and friends of the Amazon delivery driver who sadly lost his life at a level crossing in Teynham, and paid tribute to the emergency services who attended that day.

The Leader of the Swale Independents Alliance (SIA) group said whilst it was good to hear about the positive things going on in the Borough, there was little in the Leader's Statement about what the Council were doing going forward. He acknowledged the efforts and input of the staff and Councillors that were involved in progressing and

completing the Adventure Golf project, and singled out Councillor Monique Bonney and former Swale Borough Councillor (SBC) Denise Knights for their work on the project. Echoing the comments of others, the Leader of the SIA group acknowledged the success of the Lionesses, was pleased that Milton Country Park had received a green flag award and also sent his condolences to the friends and family of the Amazon delivery driver.

The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat group spoke of the fantastic work that Heather House, Sittingbourne offered residents and paid tribute to the work and dedication of former Councillor Mike Henderson on Oare Gunpowder Works. He said it was important that the Faversham Cottage Hospital was soon back up and running. The Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said the Swale Pride event had been fantastic and he advised that the Faversham Pride event was scheduled for 16 August 2025.

The Deputy Leader of the Reform UK group congratulated those involved in helping sites that had been awarded green flags. He said the England Ladies Football team victory was very inspiring and made him proud to be English. The Deputy Leader of the Reform UK group commended the work on the White Ribbon campaign and said the Council should act to stop all violence.

The Deputy Leader of the Green group supported many of the comments already made and said that preventing violence against women was supported by all, and was a problem across the world, not just Swale. He welcomed the news on the X-ray department at the Memorial Hospital, Sittingbourne but warned that staff were needed to operate facilities, and the reason for the current closure of the Faversham Cottage Hospital was a lack of staff.

Other Members were invited to make comments and these included:

- Referred to a recent incident in the car park following an evening meeting and said support for violence against women should start at home and the Council should look after their own staff, Members and visitors to Swale House;
- thanked the volunteers that kept Milton Creek Country Park tidy;
- thanked the residents of Milton Regis who cleared up rubbish left on the site by unauthorised travellers;
- questioned how many Members had taken part in the White Ribbon Ambassador training?;
- congratulated England Ladies football team and said it was important to encourage ambition and push the message that success could happen to all, even those living in deprived areas of the country;
- sent thoughts to the train driver involved the accident at the level crossing in Teynham;
- it was the responsibility of all to stop violence against women; and
- praised the work of the individuals that helped get the Adventure Golf facility to the Sheerness site and hoped it would help bring tourists to the Isle of Sheppey.

In response, the Leader acknowledged Members for their responses. He said himself and the Chair of the Housing, Health and Communities Committee recently wrote to the National Health Service (NHS) expressing their concern over the temporary closure of the Faversham Cottage Hospital. Referring to the comment made about there being no

information in the Leader's Statement about going forward, the Leader said the Annual Delivery Plan report would be discussed at the next Policy and Resources Committee scheduled for September 2025.

The Leader echoed the sentiments about former Councillor Mike Henderson and reflected on his keenness to recognise the volunteers at Oare Gunpowder Works, and he also recognised SBC's Green Spaces Ranger.

Finally, the Leader sent his sympathies to all those impacted by the accident at the level crossing in Teynham.

#### 243 **Motion - Secondary School Places on Sheppey**

Councillor Lee-Anne Moore read out the motion on the lack of Secondary School Places on the Isle of Sheppey, as set out in the Agenda pack. She said there were still 15 children currently without a secondary school place, and she spoke of the impact the uncertainty over school places had on both pupils and their families, including on mental health and parents giving up work to support their children. Councillor Moore said despite many meetings, the situation remained unresolved and she predicted the lack of school places would increase due to the amount of additional housing development planned for the Isle of Sheppey, but no additional schools.

Councillor Moore referred to the criteria over the 'two mile catchment area' for schools, pointing out that as an Island, the furthest point was six miles away from a secondary school. She urged support for the motion and said the issues urgently needed to be addressed.

As the original seconder was not in attendance, Councillor Peter Marchington seconded the motion and spoke of the unfairness of the allocation of schools.

Members were invited to speak and raise points, which included:

- Spoke in support of the motion;
- referred to the Kent Education Commissioning Plan and said it needed an urgent refresh as the figures were inaccurate and were being used to suit the circumstances of individual organisations, and without reviewing properly now there would still not be enough school places in the future;
- hoped to meet with Isle of Sheppey KCC Councillors to sort the inaccurate education plan;
- there needed to be more communication from KCC with SBC Members and officers so that increases in schools places could be planned for;
- highlighted the improvement at the Sheppey School and said all Sheppey children should be able to access a place at the school;
- welcomed national Government intervention if KCC could not improve the forecast and availability of school places;
- spoke of how the system incentivises schools to offer additional places to pupils when over capacity;
- there was a financial impact on schools where pupils had been allocated a place in accordance with the catchment area, but were realistically too far away and could not take up the place;
- hoped KCC would listen;

- allocation of school places had been an issue for many years, and never properly addressed;
- a new school was planned at Kemsley Fields, Sittingbourne to be opened in 2024 and work had not even commenced;
- housing was agreed too often without the promised infrastructure;
- there was no requirement for London Councils who sent families to live in Kent, to inform KCC that there would be additional pressure on the education service;
- the current situation was as a result of repeated failures by Government and the previous KCC administration;
- the Secretary of State for Education needed to review the service;
- called for the Sittingbourne and Sheppey MP to raise the issue in Parliament;
- was concerned at KCC's lack of interest and urgency in addressing the issue;
- the problems might have been inherited but there had been no action to address the current issues since KCC Councillors were elected in early May 2025;
- referred to the impact on children in some of the most deprived areas of the country;
- there was a clear need for better long-term planning and co-ordination; and
- SBC needed to work with KCC, the department of Education, and local communities to ensure that school place provision kept pace with local population growth and reflected the unique geography of the Isle of Sheppey.

Councillor Andy Booth proposed an alteration to Recommendation (1) of the motion to remove reference to the 'eastern parts of the Island' so that it now read:

*'Undertake an urgent review and introduce a resolution to increase the capacity of secondary school provision on the Isle of Sheppey, prioritising accessibility for all children living on the Island'.*

Councillor Mike Whiting seconded the alteration.

The proposer and seconder of the alteration accepted the change and Members agreed.

In summing up, Councillor Moore said the issue had been raised many times with KCC without a resolution and she hoped that the motion would highlight the urgent need, particularly for those pupils currently without a school place. She thanked Members for their support.

On being put to the vote, Members agreed the motion:

***Resolved:***

***That this Council calls upon Kent County Council, the Secretary of State for Education, and the Secretary of State for Housing to:***

***(1) Undertake an urgent review and introduce a resolution to increase the capacity of secondary school provision on the Isle of Sheppey, prioritising accessibility for all children living on the Island.***

***(2) Ensure that school place allocations align with the National Planning Policy Framework's requirements for sustainable development, thereby mitigating undue travel burdens on students and families.***

***(3) Collaborate with local stakeholders, including parents and community representatives, to develop a clear, long-term plan addressing current and projected educational infrastructure needs in the area.***

**244 Motion - Fighting back against censorship in our Libraries**

In proposing the motion as set out on the Agenda, Councillor Charles Gibson said the actions proposed were simple and presented no costs to the Council. He referred to recent announcements from KCC and said it was important that SBC reaffirmed its commitment to the LGBTQ plus community and for young people to have appropriate access to education and information. Councillor Gibson highlighted a recent incident that showed how important it was for SBC to reaffirm their support, and he thanked Councillor Ben J Martin for seconding the motion in Councillor Perkin's absence.

Councillor Ben J Martin seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Members were invited to speak, make comments and ask questions and these included:

- Sought clarification that the support did not include funding;
- supported freedom of speech;
- said the announcement from KCC had inadvertently drawn attention to the fantastic range of books about the LGBTQ plus community that were available in libraries;
- KCC did support the LGBTQ plus community but the books were simply moved to a more age appropriate area of the library;
- pointed out that books were displayed at the entrance of the library as it was Pride month;
- if young people were unsure of who they were and parents wanted to help, it was the parents' right to have access to literature that could assist;
- libraries were spaces for learning, exploration and community and should reflect the people they served and provided access to stories that helped individuals feel seen, understood, and respected;
- censorship by politics had no place in libraries;
- children deserved access to a wide range of identities and experiences;
- the motion sought what should already be expected, a public commitment to freedom of expression, inclusive education, and support for age appropriate, diverse content in our libraries;
- censorship did not make difficult topics disappear, it drove them into silence and stigma;
- questioned at what point did it become detrimental to keep pointing out differences in people?;
- we needed to be celebrating all people in all capacities all the time; and
- supported the motion but considered KCC had bigger issues to face and needed to focus on the issues residents had voted for them to be represented.

The seconder of the motion, Councillor Ben J Martin, said it was clear that every individual should feel respected and included, and libraries should respect diverse people and provide comprehensive education. He added that every individual might learn and absorb information from a book at different ages. Finally, Councillor Martin urged KCC to start doing business through debate at meetings and not using Press Releases.

The proposer of the motion thanked Members for their comments. He acknowledged the comment from a member of the Reform UK group that KCC and Reform UK did support the LGBTQ plus community and asked that they reflected on whether their tone and behaviour had made that clear to their LGBTQ plus employees and residents in Kent.

**Resolved:**

**That Council:**

***(1) Called on Kent County Council to reaffirm its commitment to inclusive education and freedom of expression.***

***(2) Writes to the Secretary of State for Education expressing concern about threatened censorship and requesting clear guidance that protected access to LGBTQ plus inclusive materials.***

***(3) Supported school, charity and public libraries in maintaining diverse and inclusive collections, including age-appropriate LGBT plus literatures where able.***

***(4) Celebrated and promote LGBTQ plus History Month and similar events that affirm the rights and dignity of all people, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.***

**245 Overnight vehicle issues at locations across Sheppey**

The Leader introduced the report and advised that the topic had been considered by the Community and Leisure Committee in December 2024 and at the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2025. He proposed the recommendation which was seconded by the Deputy Leader. The Deputy Leader referred to the lengthy consultation that had taken place.

**Resolved:**

***(1) That the charge of £15 per vehicle per night at Shingle Bank, Minster (including the areas of green opposite), and Shellness Road, Leysdown as recommended by the Community and Leisure Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee be agreed.***

**246 Undertaking a Community Governance Review in Swale**

The Leader introduced the report which sought to agree to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) in Swale and to agree the configuration of the steering group. He proposed the recommendations.

At the request of the Mayor, the Chief Executive clarified the timing process of setting up the steering group and the timeline of actions for carrying out a CGR as set out on Appendix A. The Chief Executive advised that the steering group meetings could take place in the evenings, on days and times that suited the members of the group, to encourage inclusivity.

In seconding the recommendations, the Deputy Leader reserved his right to speak.



The Mayor invited Members to speak and comments included:

- Supported local-decision making;
- the review was not about empire building but opening the door for sensible conversation;
- some areas might benefit from having their own local voice but to ensure value for money, needed to be careful there were not too many Parish Councils;
- the review was about giving residents a choice;
- a thorough consultation was essential;
- welcomed the benefits that some efficient Town or Parish Councils brought;
- there was a danger of losing a sense of place in the borough, particularly in unparished areas, when unitary Councils were set up;
- Sittingbourne needed a Town Council;
- Faversham Town Council was a good example of what a Town Council could provide;
- having a 'local voice' was essential as Local Government was changing;
- review was long over-due;
- the advantages and the costs of additional Parish Councils should be made clear;
- drew attention to paragraph 2.3 on page 13 of the Agenda pack, that the review could rectify existing issues;
- the public would have the final say and should be listened to;
- the steering group could consider the introduction of 'Community Councils'; and
- for those inactive Parish Councils, residents should be able to decide if they wished for them to continue.

Councillor Angela Harrison proposed an amendment that the steering group be more politically balanced and the largest group, the Labour group, should have three Members sitting on it. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Hayden Brawn and on being put to the vote, was agreed.

Members continued to debate the amended motion.

The Deputy Leader said he agreed with an all options review led by residents' feedback, and any proposals that came forward should be from residents, based on their needs. He said several wards and communities had overlapping areas and it was the steering group's role to make sure the relevant discussions took place.

***Resolved:***

***(1) That a Community Governance Review be undertaken in Swale.***

***(2) That the configuration of the Steering group be three Labour, two Conservatives, two Swale Independent Alliance, one member each from the Liberal Democrat Group, Reform UK Group and Green Group, plus the unaligned Independent member.***

**247 Chief Executive's Objectives 2025/26**

The Leader proposed the recommendation to note the report which was seconded by Councillor Lloyd Bowen.

**Resolved:**

***(1) That the objectives set for the Chief Executive for the year 2025/26 be noted.***

**248 Local Plan Review - Timetabling and Way Forward**

In introducing the report, the Chair of the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG), Councillor Charles Gibson, advised that it had already been considered at other Committees and he paid tribute to Planning Policy and Democratic Services officers for the quick turn around in changes to plans and minutes from other Committee meetings in order for it to be considered by Full Council, so that the timetable could be commenced. Councillor Gibson said it was not the desired timetable but repeated restraints by Government and others outside of the Council had led to the way forward to achieve a Local Plan as quickly as possible.

Councillor Gibson referred to the protection and benefits that would be achieved from a Regulation 18 consultation, whilst using the current model, acknowledging it was not ideal, as outlined in the recent letter received from the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). Finally, he referred to the delays in the Highsted Park planning appeal and changes in planning legislation that had significantly set back the process.

In seconding the recommendation, the Vice-Chair of the PTPWG, Councillor Brawn supported the Chair's comments. He reminded Members that recommendations had been approved unanimously at PTPWG and the Policy and Resources Committee previously.

Members were invited to speak and raised points including:

- Agreed with the Chair and Vice-Chair's comments;
- referred to the call-in of the Highsted Park planning application and the difficult position it had left the Council in;
- speculative planning applications could be submitted for many years to come;
- the outcome of Highsted Park might not be known for more than a year after the inquiry commenced; and
- clarity sought on documents and timelines contained within the report.

There was a discussion on timelines in the report and a Member considered pushing the date from December 2025 to January/February 2026 for the Regulation 18 draft local plan consultation, would cause an unnecessary delay and December 2025 was achievable. In response, the Chair of the PTPWG advised that as officers were also heavily involved in the Highsted Park appeal inquiry, there was a lack of resource to meet the December 2025 deadline. He reminded Members the dates had been agreed at the PTPWG and Policy and Resources Committee meetings earlier that month.

Members continued the debate and made points including:

- Welcomed a commencement date for the Regulation 18 consultation and for discussions of policies that could be included;
- none of the options were palatable and SBC were being held to ransom by developers;
- had concerns there would be further delays to the timetable;

- the proposal meant the Council remained vulnerable for another year;
- the delay and outcome of Highsted Park appeal were unknown;
- the delay to the Regulation 18 was not in the Council's interest; and
- referred to discussion at the Highsted Park inquiry around policy wording and ongoing debates, and urged for focus on policy wording so it was more effective.

Councillor Monique Bonney proposed that the key dates in the original timeframe as set out below, be agreed:

<b>Local Plan Stage</b>	<b>Date</b>
Publication of Regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultation	October to December 2025
Publication of submission draft Local Plan review for public Consultation (Reg 19)	April to June 2026
Submission of Plan for Examination (with results of the public consultation) Reg 22	July to September 2026
Examination hearing sessions (Reg 24) *	January to March 2027
Main modifications consultation *	April to June 2027
Adoption, Full Council (Regulation 26) *	July to September 2027

This was seconded by Councillor Julien Speed and was debated by Members who made points including:

- Supported the amendment;
- said the original recommended timeline was very tight and relied on optimism to get a Regulation 19 to adoption by the Government's deadline;
- needed to build in 'slippage' times and the amendment did that;
- understood the resource implication on staff, but this was important;
- the public needed to consider policies and implications and the Regulation 18 gave that opportunity to do that as early as possible so that feedback could be acted on;
- appreciated the workload on officers but noted there were recent additional planning policy officers;
- officers had advised there was not the capacity – did Members expect officer resource to be taken from the Highsted Park Inquiry?;
- shared the frustration that it had taken eight years to get to this point;
- the reference to additional officer capacity raised by a previous Member was not actually additional, it was filling empty vacancies to achieve the correct budgeted capacity;
- praised the work of officers working under capacity for an extended period;
- 'slippage' had already been written into the plan, but the Highsted Park Inquiry was the 'slippage';
- would have preferred the original timetable or even holding the Regulation 18 a year ago as agreed, but it was not possible, and it was now not possible to create more time for officers either;
- it was important to get it right and rushing officers who had already advised there was not the capacity was not the right way to do it;
- referred to the report that was agreed by the PTPWG and Policy and Resources Committee and questioned whether Full Council were challenging the long deliberation the working group carried out and the proposal agreed?;

- could not support the amendment, when the proposal had already been discussed at length at PTPWG and Policy and Resources Committee, and officers had advised there was not the capacity; and
- spoke of the detrimental impact pushing officers too far might have.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 3.1.19(2), a recorded vote was taken, and voting was as follows:

**For: Baldock, Bonney, Carnell, MacDonald, Mishchuk, Nundy, Pollard, Speed, P Stephen, S Stephen and Whiting. Total equals 11.**

**Against: Booth, Brawn, Cavanagh, Cheesman, C Gibson, T Gibson, Golding, Gould, Harrison, Jackson, Last, Marchington, Ben J Martin, C Martin, Miller, Thompson, Watson, Winckless and Wise. Total equals 19.**

**Abstain: Bowen and Moore. Total equals 2.**

The Mayor announced the amendment had fallen.

Members continued to debate the substantive motion and made comments including:

- had raised concerned at the Policy and Resources Committee over the delays and whilst disappointing, realistically the timetable proposed now was how to move forward; and
- urged Members to support the recommendation.

In summing up, Councillor Charles Gibson said whilst nobody was happy with the current situation, the Council must have a Local Plan, and the proposal would get the Council where it needed to be.

**Resolved:**

***(1) That the updated Local Plan Development Scheme as set out in Option 1 of the report from the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group be agreed.***

## 249 Decisions from the Urgent Decisions Committee

**Resolved:**

***(1) That the decisions made by the Urgent Decisions Committee at its meeting on 27 June 2025 be noted.***

## 250 Independent Persons - extension of contracts

The Chair of the Standards Committee introduced the report and proposed the recommendation which sought to extend the appointments of the current Independent Persons to September 2029. The Monitoring Officer clarified that there was no prejudice to any future authority in the extension of the contract, should the current timetable of SBC moving to a unitary authority go ahead.

Councillor Baldock said there needed to be wider debate on the appointments which were important positions. Councillor Bonney questioned whether long-standing

appointments were best value.

The Monitoring Officer clarified the role was to provide guidance to all in the Standards process.

During the closed session, Councillor Mike Baldock proposed an amendment to the recommendation which he amended to the following when in open discussion:

*“To establish a mechanism to consider whether to seek to widen the opportunity of the panel of people that would be interested in standing to be an independent person on the Standards Committee.”*

Before it was seconded, the Monitoring Officer advised that since the existing contract of the current independent persons was due to end, it was unlawful for the Council to be without at least one Independent Person.

Councillor Wise suggested the current contracts be extended whilst the opportunity to widen to others was explored.

Councillor Bowen supported the suggestion made by Councillor Wise, and sought clarification on the word ‘mechanism’ in the amendment as said it was not clear.

Councillor Bonney sought clarification on the extension of the contract and highlighted the inflexibility of making changes within the agreed contract time.

Councillor Bonney then amended the recommendation to the following:

*“That the current contract of the existing Independent Persons be extended to one year, and the Standards Committee review the mechanism of recruitment in order to broaden the scope to appoint future independent persons.”*

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Wise and on being put to the vote Members agreed.

**Resolved:**

***(1) That the period of appointment of Patricia Richards and Christopher Webb as Independent Persons be extended for a further one year to September 2026 and the Standards Committee review the mechanism of recruitment in order to broaden the scope to appoint future independent persons.***

251 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**Resolved:**

***That under Section 100 (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Schedule 12A of the Act:***

- 1. Information relating to any individual***
- 2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual***

**252 Decisions from the Urgent Committee - Exempt Appendix**

There was no discussion on the exempt appendix.

**253 Independent Persons - Extension of Contracts - Exempt Appendix**

Members did not discuss any information within the exempt appendix.

**254 Adjournment**

There was an adjournment from 8.25 pm until 8.35 pm.

**255 Extension of Standing Orders**

At 10 pm, Members agreed to the suspension of Standing Orders in order that Council could complete its business.

Mayor

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel