

## MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

At the meeting of the Council for the District of Dover held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 21 July 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor M D Conolly

Councillors:

J S Back	D Hannent	O C de R Richardson
T J Bartlett	J P Haste	M Rose
D G Beaney	S J Jones	C A Vinson
S H Beer	P D Jull	R S Walkden
E A Biggs	L A Keen	P Walker
T A Bond	N S Kenton	H M Williams
P M Brivio	S C Manion	C F Woodgate
S S Chandler	K Mills	C D Zosseder
D G Cronk	D P Murphy	

Officers: Chief Executive  
Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)  
Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)  
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer  
Democratic and Corporate Services Manager

### 18 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bates and N J Collor.

### 19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 19 May 2021 and the Annual Meeting held on 19 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

### 21 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman of the Council, Councillor M D Conolly, made the following announcements:

- (a) To advise that Councillors M J Holloway and J Rose had resigned. He thanked them both for the contribution that they had made to the Council during their service.
- (b) To inform the Council of the sad news of the death of Bruce Grant, Senior Multi-Skilled Tradesperson in the Assets Maintenance team and that he had sent a letter of condolence to Mr Grant's family on behalf of the Council.

### 22 LEADER'S TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) That the resignations of Councillors M J Holloway and J Rose was a sad loss to the Council and that he wished them both well in their future endeavours. He also wished good luck to the candidates standing for election in the vacant seats.
- (b) That the Council had launched its Tourism Strategy during an organised visit from the Tourism Minister.
- (c) To thank everyone who participated in the Great British Spring Clean event and also to thank the officers involved in organising it.
- (d) That he had been a judge in a local photography competition for children. There had been 73 excellent entries which had been reduced to a shortlist of 25 entries. There would be a prize giving held to congratulate the winners.
- (e) That he had attended the opening of the Clock Tower Square which was part of the Dover Wester Docks Revival redevelopment. He welcomed the modern and vibrant new public space.
- (f) That he had met the first tenants of Bomford Place, named after a prominent member of Dover's suffrage movement, and advised that all 24 units were now occupied. That the Burgess Place development was also expected to go live this week. He had also viewed four other sites as part of the Council's target of developing 500 new homes.
- (g) That possible sites for the Dame Vera Lynn Footpath had been identified in discussion with her family at the Western Heights.
- (h) That the Council had made an ambitious bid to the Levelling Up Fund. This included the development of a memorial park and amphitheatre. If the bid was successful, the Council would undertake consultation and stakeholder engagement on the proposals.
- (i) To highlight the great work at Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens and celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Russell Gardens. The new landscaping, new café and new play area had received a lot of positive feedback.
- (j) To acknowledge the disappointing performance of the waste contract operated by Veolia and the frustration experienced by residents affected by it. Veolia advised that they had been affected by the shortage of HGV drivers and the 'pingdemic'. The Council was working with Veolia to get performance back on track.
- (k) That following public feedback the Government had amended its proposals for the Inland Border Facility and it was now proposed that there would be two sites with a reduction in the size of the original proposed site.
- (l) That £80,000 had been awarded in community grants and that he was looking forward to further grant rounds.

- (m) To celebrate the success of the 149<sup>th</sup> Open Golf Championship and highlight the potential inward investment opportunities. He thanked the Council's team working on the project for their work and advised that the Open Golf Championship would return to St George's in the future.
- (n) To thank the NHS staff who were present at the 149<sup>th</sup> Open Golf Championship.
- (o) To thank the Head of Inward Investment and Tourism for his 45 years of public service and wish him best for his retirement. He noted that there would be a legacy of investments to be proud of.
- (p) To offer his thoughts and prayers to the family of PCSO Julia James whose funeral would be held on 22 July 2021.

The Leader of the Opposition Labour Group, Councillor K Mills, included the following matters in his report:

- (a) To echo the Leader's comments in respect of PCSO Julia James.
- (b) To state that the Head of Inward Investment and Tourism would be greatly missed and stress the importance of continuing the efforts to attract inward investment and regeneration.
- (c) To state that the Council would miss Councillor M J Holloway's drive and to wish Councillor J Rose the best for the future.
- (d) That the Council needed to be clear to local people how the Levelling Up Fund would benefit them and to be ambitious in the Council's bid. However, most important was to ensure that something useful came out of the bid.
- (e) To welcome the community grants made but highlight that demand for the grants was increasing.
- (f) To thank the NHS for their work and acknowledge the pressure they were working under.
- (g) To ask when the Dover Schematic would be shared with local residents so they could see the plans for the future.
- (h) To point out that some of the problems with the waste contract pre-dated its start in April. In respect of the new contract, he highlighted that the new rounds were not working and questioned what service the Council was getting for its money. He emphasised the need to monitor the contract and communicate clearly with local residents about the problems. He noted that some residents had resorted to private collections to clear their uncollected waste.
- (i) To ask what discussions the Leader had undertaken with Southern Waste about the flooding problems affecting Deal.
- (j) To point out some residents in Dover received the Deal Reconnect leaflet.

- (k) To ask when the benefits and costs of the Open Golf Championship would be evaluated and what had been done to address the concerns of local residents.
- (l) To note that the issue that had led to concerns over the use of S106 money in Aylesham had now been rectified.
- (m) That the Council needed to work with Kent County Council over the future of the Blackfish Theatre.
- (n) That the Council had been too quiet in opposing racism and that it had a responsibility in taking a lead against racism.

In response the Leader of the Council advised:

- (a) That succession planning for the Head of Inward Investment and Tourism was in place and that a Head of Growth would be appointed soon.
- (b) That the Council had been advised not to share information at this time on some aspects of the Levelling Up Fund but accepted that the Council did need to share more information when it was able to do so.
- (c) To welcome the transformation of the Sunrise Café and express support for its good work.
- (d) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment would keep pressing Veolia to resolve the problems with the performance of the waste contract.
- (e) That he would be providing an update to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the autumn on discussions with Southern Water.
- (f) That the £7 million spent on the Discovery Centre would hopefully bring the building back into better use.
- (g) To agree that there was a need to assess the benefits of the Open Golf Championship.
- (h) That the district needed to stand united against racism.

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#### APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, Councillor T J Bartlett gave notice of his intention to appoint an Executive comprising of the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council and five portfolios.

RESOLVED: (a) That it be noted that the Leader of the Council had given formal notification to the Monitoring Officer of his intention to appoint the following portfolio structure:

- Leader
- Deputy Leader
- Community and Corporate Property
- Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change
- Social Housing and Port Health

- Planning and Environment
- Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services

(b) That it be noted that the Leader of the Council had appointed the following Members to the following Portfolios:

Deputy Leader	O C de R Richardson
Community and Corporate Property	O C de R Richardson
Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change	C A Vinson
Social Housing and Port Health	D P Murphy
Planning and Environment	N S Kenton
Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services	M Bates

## 24 APPOINTMENT OF SHADOW CABINET

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules, Councillor K Mills gave notice of his intention to appoint a Shadow Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with notice provided by the Leader of the Opposition Group, the Shadow Cabinet be composed of the following:

Leader of the Main Opposition Group	K Mills
Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group	P M Brivio
Community and Corporate Property	H M Williams
Finance, Governance, Digital and Climate Change	S H Beer
Social Housing and Port Health	P M Brivio
Planning and Environment	E A Biggs
Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services	L A Keen

## 25 SEAT ALLOCATION AND GROUP APPOINTMENTS

It was moved by Councillor T J Bartlett and duly seconded by Councillor N S Kenton

RESOLVED: That the following changes be made to appointments within the approved allocation of seats for the Conservative Group:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Member Removed</u>	<u>Member Appointed</u>
Appointments Committee	Vacancy	O C de R Richardson
Dover Joint Transportation Advisory	Vacancy	C A Vinson

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Member Removed</u>	<u>Member Appointed</u>
Board		
East Kent Service Committee	Vacancy	O C de R Richardson
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Vacancy M Bates	D A Hawkes P D Jull
Planning Committee	O C de R Richardson	D A Hawkes

## 26 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 (as amended by Council Procedure Rule 28.9), a question from Graham Wanstall was put to the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“Next year we celebrate 70 years on the throne of H.M. the Queen with the Platinum Jubilee. The Pencester Gardens in Dover is approaching its centenary since given to the Borough of Dover in the 1920’s. To mark this important occasion I propose we rename Pencester Gardens “Queen Elizabeth Park” and organise a Dover Party for the June 2022 weekend in the Gardens to formally adopt the new name and celebrate Her Majesty’s Jubilee and I ask you to support this proposal and to facilitate it as time is short?”

In response the Leader of the Council stated:

“As Mr Wanstall has said, 2022 promises to be a very special year for our nation as we celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee.

The government has already announced an additional bank holiday so that there will be four days of celebrations from 2nd to 5th June and I am sure that Town and Parish Councils across our District will be making plans to commemorate the occasion with street parties and other such events.

As regards the idea of renaming Pencester Gardens as “Queen Elizabeth Park”, the gardens were acquired by the Council in the 1920’s and are named after John de Pencester who had helped to defeat Louis the Dauphin of France at the time of the Battle of Dover in 1216.

Given that the current name already commemorates an event in Dover’s history, I am reluctant to change this, but I have noted this suggestion and will consider how the Council can mark the anniversary in an appropriate way. There is for example already a campaign being promoted, the ‘Queen’s Green Canopy’ which aims to encourage the planting of trees across our nation, which we are considering taking part in.”

## 27 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor C D Zosseder presented the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of its Food Poverty Review. She thanked the groups in the district that were trying to tackle the issue of food poverty and in particular those that had taken the time to meet with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was moved by Councillor C D Zosseder, duly seconded by Councillor M Rose, and

- RESOLVED: (a) That Council request the Cabinet form a Food Poverty Working Group on the following basis:
- (i) That the objective of the food poverty working group be to investigate ways in which the Council can assist in tackling the issue of food poverty and its underlying causes in the district and as part of this how the Council can support the vital role undertaken by the voluntary and community sector.
  - (ii) That the working group membership be politically balanced.
  - (iii) That a representative from the Cabinet be appointed to the working group.
  - (iv) That the working group be administratively supported by the Head of Community and Digital Services.
  - (v) That the working group be time limited to two years of operation and be required to report to Cabinet on its conclusions at the end of that period.
  - (vi) That the final Terms of Reference be determined by the Cabinet taking into account points (i) to (v).
- (b) That the Council recognises the importance of the work undertaken by Community Services in respect of deprivation and food poverty issues.
- (c) That the Council welcomes the participation by Dover District Council in the East Kent Food Poverty Working Group.
- (d) That the Council notes the excellent work undertaken by the Community and Voluntary Sector in respect of food poverty in the Dover district.

## 28 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

In accordance with Rule 12(1) of the Council Procedure Rules, Members of the Cabinet responded to the following questions:

- (1) Councillor P M Brivio asked the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services, Councillor M Bates:

“DDC has already demanded a review of the whole procedure leading to the chaos and gridlock that occurred in Dover over the Christmas period,

so that lessons are learnt from what happened. This should be acted upon to ensure that there is a strategy in place to ensure such a situation does not happen again; residents and the council must be fully informed of this new strategy.

Is the Portfolio Holder able to advise when this council and more importantly the Public were advised of the new strategy?"

Reply by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment, Councillor N S Kenton (in the absence of Councillor M Bates):

"Since the French border closure at the end of 2020 a Kent Police operation called Op Merlon has been created to mitigate a repeat of this situation. This operation creates control points on all the major routes into the town and far enough away to enable the town to be free from congestion.

This operation will only be deployed if the border is closed and is an Officially sensitive document.

DDC works closely with both highways agencies and DfT with regards the impacts on the community with disruptions at the port."

(2) Councillor K Mills asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

"Is the leader able to advise the Council and Public why no one from the Cabinet or controlling administration attended the recent public meeting on the CO Innovations Centre despite as stated in the press that invites were sent?"

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

"Yes. Let me firstly say that I have visited the Co-Innovation Centre on a number of occasions and am appreciative of how this facility has operated and been supported by the Council since 2018 over the period of temporary use.

In answer to a press enquiry prior to the recent public meeting, a statement was issued clearly setting out our position; namely that:

We will continue to work closely with the Co-Innovation Centre. I, along with the Chief Executive and Head of Community and Digital Services met with operators of the site prior to the public meeting to provide the latest information. In this respect, it was confirmed that we are looking at ways that we could support the operators financially subject to the receipt of a suitable business plan. We have now received a proposal which is being considered.

Given this background, it was not considered necessary to attend the meeting later in the day."

(3) Councillor K Mills asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

"Could the leader please advise council of the outcomes of any discussions held with DHB regarding fishing from the admiralty pier."



Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“I am not aware of any discussions with the Port of Dover regarding changes to the arrangements regarding fishing from the Admiralty Pier.”

(4) Councillor E A Biggs asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor T J Bartlett:

“With the announcement that Dover will now be enjoying 2 massive border facilities can the leader advise of the locality of this second huge benefit to Dover, so that the affected residents can relocate to an area where they will not be subjected to the blight of thousands of HGV’s.”

Reply by the Leader of the Council:

“The proposed location of the second site cannot be disclosed yet due to commercial sensitivity. The proposed location will be shared as soon as possible.

However, it is an established commercial site and is not in a residential area or close to one.”

## 29 MOTIONS

### Motion 1

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor C A Vinson moved the Motion of which he had given notice as followed:

“This Council notes:

- That the average age of a Dover district resident in 2016 was 43.3 years old, and the average age of local authority councillors across the country in 2018 was 59.4 years old.
- That just 22% (7 of the 32) Dover district councillors elected in May 2019 were female, compared to 50.8% of the district’s population, and that analysis of the 2021 local elections by the Fawcett Society found that only 33% of the candidates were female.
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background.
- That clarifying the Council’s arrangements for parental leave is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors;
- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.
- That Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 already permits the Council to approve a leave of absence for any member such that they would not cease to be a councillor if they did not attend meetings of the Council for a period of six-months or more.

This Council resolves:

- To encourage a broad range of candidates to stand for election, regardless of background, and particularly from groups that might be reluctant to do so – such as candidates who are younger, female or have family and/or caring responsibilities
- To ensure that councillors that are new or adoptive parents, as well as councillors with older children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate
- To ensure that the Council's Constitution clearly sets out the process by which members can seek a leave of absence, which should reflect not only the formal legislative permission required for periods longer than six-months, but also the Council's own process to support new and adoptive parents seeking a period of leave of shorter duration
- That pending formal changes to the Constitution, the Council look favourably upon ad hoc requests for parental or adoption leave
- That requests for parental or adoption leave should not be unreasonably refused
- That councillors have a responsibility to their constituents to ensure that their ward casework is covered for any period of absence, which may require support from other elected representatives in multi-member wards, or their political group as appropriate
- That the Council's website should be updated to show when a member is taking a period of absence, alongside details of any arrangements they have made to allow for constituency work in their ward to be covered."

The Motion was duly seconded by Councillor C D Zosseder.

RESOLVED: This Council notes:

- That the average age of a Dover district resident in 2016 was 43.3 years old, and the average age of local authority councillors across the country in 2018 was 59.4 years old.
- That just 22% (7 of the 32) Dover district councillors elected in May 2019 were female, compared to 50.8% of the district's population, and that analysis of the 2021 local elections by the Fawcett Society found that only 33% of the candidates were female.
- That the role of a councillor should be open to all, regardless of their background.
- That clarifying the Council's arrangements for parental leave is a step towards encouraging a wider range of people to become councillors, and is also a step to encourage existing councillors who may want to start a family to remain as councillors;
- That parental leave must apply to parents regardless of their gender, and that it should also cover adoption leave to support those parents who choose to adopt.
- That Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 already permits the Council to approve a leave of absence for any member such that they would not cease to be a councillor if they

did not attend meetings of the Council for a period of six-months or more.

This Council resolves:

- To encourage a broad range of candidates to stand for election, regardless of background, and particularly from groups that might be reluctant to do so – such as candidates who are younger, female or have family and/or caring responsibilities
- To ensure that councillors that are new or adoptive parents, as well as councillors with older children and other caring commitments are supported as appropriate
- To ensure that the Council's Constitution clearly sets out the process by which members can seek a leave of absence, which should reflect not only the formal legislative permission required for periods longer than six-months, but also the Council's own process to support new and adoptive parents seeking a period of leave of shorter duration
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- That requests for parental or adoption leave should not be unreasonably refused
- That councillors have a responsibility to their constituents to ensure that their ward casework is covered for any period of absence, which may require support from other elected representatives in multi-member wards, or their political group as appropriate
- That the Council's website should be updated to show when a member is taking a period of absence, alongside details of any arrangements they have made to allow for constituency work in their ward to be covered.

### Motion 2

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor H M Williams moved the Motion of which she had given notice as followed:

“This council believes that the £20 extra allowance for Universal Credit, should be kept past September.

We move that the leader write on behalf of the council, before the summer recess of parliament, to request that this increase be kept.

### **Background to the motion**

In January 2021, the council approved my motion to write to the government requesting that they extend the £20 weekly increase in Universal Credit. I am proposing a similar motion now, because this increase is due to end in September, and the number of claimants in Dover have increased so much. The £20 increase has been a lifeline during the pandemic.

Looking at the statistics, these show that In April, we had just under 11,500 claimants, this being a 65% increase since March 2020. This means 16.5% of the DDC population are claimants, which is a high proportion for Dover. Further rises in unemployment, and therefore UC claimants, are expected as furlough ends this autumn. As the cost of living is rising, we know many local families are struggling to pay for rent, utilities and food. They need this extra money.

Indeed, the problem is widely recognised, and 6 former work and pensions Secretaries, including Amber Rudd and Sir Iain Duncan Smith wrote to Rishi Sunak during the weekend of 4/5 July arguing for the uplift to be retained. Many other senior Conservative MPs are criticising this decision, which will push many people below the poverty line.

I hope this council will back my motion.”

The Motion was duly seconded by Councillor P M Brivio.

It was moved as an AMENDMENT by Councillor C A Vinson, and duly seconded by Councillor S S Chandler that

“This Council recognises the unprecedented financial support provided by the Government to protect livelihoods during the Covid-19 pandemic, including increasing legacy benefits by a total of £700 million over 2020 and 2021, making £500 payments to Working Tax Credit claimants, and extending the temporary £20 a week increase in Universal Credit for six months to September 2021, noting that this will be well after the end of national lockdown and most if not all economic restrictions will have been eased.

Furthermore, the Council asks the Government to conduct a review of the appropriate level of Universal Credit in the context of the easing of restrictions, increasing wages, falling unemployment and economic recovery. This Council believes that the temporary £20 uplift in Universal Credit should be retained until such time as this review is completed to provide continued support to those in hardship.

We move that the Leader write to the relevant Minister on behalf of the Council to make this request.”

The mover of the original Motion, with the consent of her seconder, agreed to accept the proposed AMENDMENT.

On being put to the vote it was

**RESOLVED:** This Council recognises the unprecedented financial support provided by the Government to protect livelihoods during the Covid-19 pandemic, including increasing legacy benefits by a total of £700 million over 2020 and 2021, making £500 payments to Working Tax Credit claimants, and extending the temporary £20 a week increase in Universal Credit for six months to September 2021, noting that this will be well after the end of national lockdown and most if not all economic restrictions will have been eased.

Furthermore, the Council asks the Government to conduct a review of the appropriate level of Universal Credit in the context of the easing of restrictions, increasing wages, falling unemployment and economic recovery. This Council believes that the temporary £20 uplift in Universal Credit should be retained until such time as

this review is completed to provide continued support to those in hardship.

We move that the Leader write to the relevant Minister on behalf of the Council to make this request.”

30 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

31 MARKET SQUARE PROJECT

This item of business had been withdrawn from the agenda.

32 URGENT BUSINESS TIME

There were no items of urgent business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm