

Draft minutes of the special meeting of the Council of the Town of Abingdon-on-Thames held on Thursday 30th August 2012 at 7.00pm in the Committee Room at the Old Abbey House, Abingdon

Present:

Cllr Monica Lovatt	Mayor
Cllr Andrew Todd	Deputy Mayor
Cllr Alice Badcock	
Cllr Marilyn Badcock	
Cllr Michael Badcock	
Cllr Samantha Bowring	
Cllr Iain Littlejohn	
Cllr Sandy Lovatt	
Cllr Hermann Matheson	
Cllr Julie Mayhew-Archer	
Cllr Penny McDougall	
Cllr Alison Rooke	

In attendance:

Mr Nigel Warner	Town Clerk (Clerk to the meeting)
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43. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Jason Fiddaman, Peter Jones, Jeanette Halliday, Angela Lawrence, Lesley Legge, Patrick Lonergan, Aidan Melville, Katie Nobes and Helen Pighills.

44. **Declarations of Interest**

The Town Clerk confirmed that the advice from the District Council Monitoring Officer is that membership of other local authorities is not deemed to be a declarable pecuniary interest.

There were no declarations of interest.

45. **Minutes**

The Town Clerk explained that the minutes of the Special Council Meeting held on 27th June 2012 were being brought forward to this meeting rather than the next ordinary meeting of the Council as they were pertinent to the business of this meeting.

Resolved: to adopt the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Council held on 27th June 2012 as a correct record.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report of the Special Council Meeting which had been held on 28th August 2012 and read the resolution out to Members (see minutes of 28th August 2012).

46. **Electoral Review of Vale of White Horse**

The Council considered its final response to the consultation from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in relation to the next phase of the Electoral Review of the Vale of White Horse.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, reported that the Town Council's proposed warding structure had been put forward to the previous evening's meeting of the District Council, and that the District Council had agreed to adopt this recommendation in its response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) consultation, in preference to that of its Working Group, by 19 votes to 17. He reminded the Council that following the submissions to this phase of the consultation, the LGBCE would publish their draft recommendations in relation to warding arrangements in November 2012 and there would then be a further eight week period of consultation on the draft recommendations before the Commission considered all representations received and formulated its final recommendations. It was anticipated that the final recommendations would be published in March 2013. It was recognised that because of the guidance which the LGBCE were working to, the five ward solution for the District wards would create some additional small Town Council wards; this would also be the case if the ten ward solution had been adopted. However, it was understood that the District Council would be undertaking a community governance review shortly after the adoption of the LGBCE's final recommendation and there would be an opportunity as part of this review to make a further adjustment, including achieving co-terminosity of district and town ward boundaries.

Members debated the merits of the five ward option. A Member stated that this option achieved as much co-terminosity with the county division boundaries as was practical and also reflected the natural communities within the town. The five ward solution would allow a team approach within wards to be adopted at both district and town levels.

A Member stated that the five ward approach would create a town ward of only 253 voters. However the Leader of the Council, Cllr Sandy Lovatt, emphasised that it was highly unlikely that the small wards would ever be used at an election as he and the Town Clerk had been assured by the Chief Executive of the District Council of their intention, as stated above, to move a community governance review. Such a review was always going to be necessary as the ten ward option being put forward would also create smaller wards.

A member stated that names of the wards given within the five ward option needed further consideration and there was common agreement that this needed to be undertaken at the next stage of the review.

It was proposed by Cllr Michael Badcock and seconded by Cllr Iain Littlejohn that the Town Council support the recommendation of the District Council that the Abingdon-on-Thames be divided into five District wards, and that the intention of the Town Council be that these wards should be co-terminous with the District Council wards. For the Town Council it was further proposed that there be four town councillors in each ward, with the exception of the Northcourt ward (which was the smallest ward in terms of electorate,) which would have a representation of three members, and that overall the size of the Town Council should therefore be 19.

Cllrs Samantha Bowring, Julie Mayhew-Archer and Alison Rooke requested that, in accordance with Standing Order 6, a named vote should be recorded against this motion.

In favour of the motion, 8 votes: Cllrs Alice Badcock; Marilyn Badcock; Michael Badcock; Iain Littlejohn; Monica Lovatt; Sandy Lovatt; Hermann Matheson and Andrew Todd.

Against the motion, 3 votes: Cllrs Samantha Bowring; Julie Mayhew-Archer and Alison Rooke.

Abstention, 1 vote: Cllr Penny McDougall.

The motion was therefore approved as the **resolved** position of the Council.

The Town Clerk stated that he would now draft the Council's response to the consultation and ask Members whether they wished him to reiterate the Council's previous opposition to the reduction of the Vale of White Horse District Council from 51 to 38 members.

Members requested that this be reiterated within the submission and it was **resolved** that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to make written representations to the LGBCE in relation to the consultation. A copy of this submission is attached.

The meeting rose at 7.38 pm.