

Didcot Town Council

Council Meeting

Monday 4th September 2023 at 7.30pm
Main Hall, Didcot Civic Hall



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of the Council.

PRESENT

Councillors:

A Jones (Deputy Mayor)	J Loder
J Broadbent	D Macdonald
S Cole	K Morrison
D Guerra Aragao	S Nohre
N Hards	G Roberts
L Hislop	D Rouane
M Khan	G Ryall
C Jennings (Leader)	T Worgan

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk
Lucy Blake - Deputy Town Clerk

Twelve members of the public were present.

The meeting began with a presentation from the Didcot Garden Team on the status of their projects. There was time allowed for questions from Councillors and from the audience.

40. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs O Glover, A Macdonald (Mayor), H Macdonald, A Hudson, and Z Mohammed.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by Cllr M Khan, and **RESOLVED** to suspend the Standing Orders to allow the public to address the Council.

All members agreed.

Ten members of the public spoke about the motion for a blanket 20 mph scheme. Their main points were:

- Lack of public referendum.
- Anti car agenda.
- Minority support.
- Lack of research, transparency, or details in the motion.
- Election results should not indicate support for a motion.
- Only a handful of accidents shown in the motion involved pedestrians.
- Arterial routes should be unchanged.
- Lack of trust in the OCC to respect the results of any consultation.
- Previous objections being ignored.
- Poor implementation in neighbouring towns.
- Boundary with other towns meaning that roads will have a changing speed limit (such as Wantage Road).
- Blanket speed limit is discriminatory.
- Some residents HAVE to commute via a car, as local services are inadequate.
- Poor condition of the roads, nuisance parking and low visibility are bigger causes of crashes.
- Lack of enforcement.
- Cost of the scheme.

One member of the public spoke in support of the scheme. Their main points were:

- Didcot is only 2 miles wide, meaning that a maximum delay with the reduced speed limit will be 1 minute.
- Virtually all Didcot roads are residential, or commuter roads.
- OCC can evaluate which roads can be retained at 30 mph.

One member of the public spoke regarding item 4 - *To receive the Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority and to consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 98 to 112*, with the following points:

- The finance budgets were concerning, such as the high cost of emergency repairs for the Civic Hall roof and the high loans for the Edmonds Park Pavilion.
- Lack of explanation as to why some Environment and Climate Committee progress items are on amber status.

- Lack of mention of the SODC “adopt a tree scheme” on the Environment and Climate Committee minutes.

The member of the public also praised the recommendation to create a new apprenticeship position in the Outdoor Team, and queried whether such positions should also be made available within the Office team.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by Cllr D Roaune, and **RESOLVED** to bring item 8i) forward in the agenda.

All members agreed.

41. To consider two motions:

i) To approve a recommendation from the Planning & Development Committee to introduce a blanket 20mph speed limit throughout Didcot

Cllr D Rouane presented the motion and explained that it was proposed on the grounds of safety. Cllr D Rouane also explained that while the number of fatalities is low, as per the Oxfordshire County Council’s “Vision Zero”, no fatalities were acceptable. The map also excluded some unreported incidents or near misses.

Cllr D Rouane further explained that the OCC officers stated that having multiple different speed zones could cause a distraction to the driver. The motion excluded roads which were above 30 mph.

Cllr D Rouane stated that OCC oversee the fire services and that they would be a part of the consultation process. OCC also stated that the reduction in speed limit would reduce the number of car accidents, meaning that fewer callouts would be necessary.

Cllr D Rouane explained that there is a difference between a referendum and a consultation, and that the consultations include reasons for support or objections.

The motion was proposed by Cllr D Rouane, seconded by Cllr T Worgan.

Cllr G Ryall moved an amendment to the motion, stating that some roads should be excluded from the blanket approach, citing issues such as busses, pollution caused by slower moving vehicles, and the impact on traffic throughout the area. The following roads would be excluded from the speed limit reduction:

A4130, including Abingdon Road and Hadden Hill, B4493 between its junctions with the A4130 and Foxhall Road, the short stretch of Broadway between Jubilee Way and the A4130, Foxhall Road between its junctions with Park Road and Station Road, Jubilee Way, Park Road, Wantage Road.

The amendment was proposed by Cllr G Ryall and seconded by Cllr N Hards.

Cllr M Khan stated that he supported the amendment, and while he understood the necessities of reducing the speed limits on the grounds of safety, especially around schools, he did not agree that all roads should be reduced. A balance between safety and keeping the town moving must be achieved.

Cllr D Rouane stated that he did not accept the amendment and explained that some of the roads requested in the amendment were already excluded.

Cllr D Rouane explained why other areas would not be suitable to retain a 30 mph limit.

Cllr C Jennings stated that the town is expanding, and therefore a blanket approach is necessary.

Cllr N Hards explained that he is opposed to a blanket approach, as it could potentially cause more people to “tailgate” and could encourage people to go faster on some roads. Cllr N Hards further stated that the amendment is consistent with the debates which occurred in a previous Committee meeting, and that it is not advised to decrease the speed on the roads which did not need it, such as Jubilee Way.

Cllr G Ryall requested that the vote on the amendment be recorded.

Councillor Name	For	Against	Abstain
D Aragao		X	
J Broadbent	X		
S Cole		X	
O Glover	-	-	-
N Hards	X		
L Hislop	X		
A Hudson	-	-	-
C Jennings (L)		X	
A Jones (DM)		X	
M Khan	X		
J Loder		X	
A Macdonald (M)	-	-	-
D Macdonald	X		
H Macdonald	-	-	-
Z Mohammed	-	-	-
K Morrison (DL)		X	
S Nohre			X
G Roberts		X	
D Rouane		X	
G Ryall	X		
T Worgan		X	

Votes **IN FAVOUR**: 6, votes **AGAINST**: 9, **ABSTENTIONS**: 1, the amendment **FAILS**.

Cllr S Cole stated that out of the reports that he had read, most of them were in favour of the 20 mph limits. He further stated that in Oxfordshire, there was a yearly average of 49 fatalities and 432 serious injuries. The estimated annual cost of these accidents is estimated at £130 million.

Cllr M Khan expressed his disappointment with the lack of support for the amendment and reiterated that the residents are against a blanket nature of the reduction in the speed limits.

Cllr D Rouane explained that there would be no cost to Didcot Town Council to implement the reduction in speed limits. He also explained that the A4130, including Abingdon Road and Hadden Hill, and the B4493 between its junctions with the A4130 and Foxhall Road would be excluded from the motion.

Votes **IN FAVOUR**: 10, votes **AGAINST**: 6, the motion **PASSES**.

The agenda resumed in order.

42. To receive declarations of interests

There were no declarations.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan to **extend** the allocated meeting time by 30 minutes.

All members agreed.

43. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th June 2023 and the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 7th August 2023 to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

Cllr M Khan queried a clerical error on page 3.3 of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting. The voting for the motion on the HIF response should have been unanimous.

It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26th of June 2023 and the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 7th of August 2023, subject to the correction.

All members agreed.

44. To receive the Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority and to consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 98 to 112

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan to **approve** all the minutes of the Committees together and go through the individual recommendations separately.

All members agreed.

(a) Planning and Development Committee

Meetings were held on 21st June 2023; 12th July 2023; 2nd August 2023 and 23rd August 2023.

NB: The Recommendation on the motion for 20mph throughout Didcot was a separate agenda item

(b) Finance and General Purposes Committee

Meetings were held on 24th July 2023 and 21st August 2023.

(i) Recommendations to Council:

Minute 39 – *To note the emergency repair of the Civic Hall roof with Hawkins Roofing Ltd at a cost of £22,651.30 + VAT.* It was **RESOLVED** to approve and note this emergency repair.

Minute 42 – *To vire the EMR 327 Building Projects Fund to EMR 329 Election Fund to make a total of £35,596 towards election fees.* It was **RESOLVED** to approve this virement in order to pay for the local elections.

Minute 57 - *To note the draw down of the remaining loan of £2.4m from PWLB to complete the building of the Edmonds Park Community & Sports Pavilion.* It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draw down of the remaining loan and invest whilst the building was progressing. All members agreed.

(c) Environment & Climate Committee held on 10th July 2023.

The Council noted that no recommendations were made.

(d) Personnel and Administration Committee held on 31st July 2023.

(i) Recommendations to Council

Minute 19 – *To adopt the Alcohol & Substance Policy*
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the policy.

Minute 21 – *To approve the appointment of a candidate to complete the Level 2 Horticultural Operative Apprenticeship course with Abingdon & Witney College*
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** recruitment for a suitable apprentice. All members agreed.

Minute 22 – *To adopt the Needles, Sticks and Sharps Policy*
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the policy.

Minute 23 – *To adopt the Equality & Diversity Policy*
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the policy.

Minute 24 – *To adopt the Health & Safety Policy*
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the Policy.

(e) Property & Facilities Committee held on 26th July 2023.

The Council noted that no recommendations were made.

45. To receive the Mayor's report – 27th June 2023 – 25th August 2023

The Council noted the Mayor's report and Deputy Mayor's report.

46. To agree "Expressions of Interest" to install EV chargers in DTC properties in Didcot

Cllr M Khan spoke in support of the EV chargers in the DTC properties.

It was **RESOLVED** to **approve** the expressions of interest and send off to OCC. All members agreed.

47. To confirm the membership of Standing Committees for Cllr S Nohre

Cllr C Jennings would step down from the Planning and Development Committee to make space for Cllr S Nohre to serve as the new Committee member.

All members agreed.

48. To consider the second motion:

ii) To consider the email from a Didcot resident regarding the postal service in Didcot

Cllr M Khan stated that the presented motion was not of the adequate quality, structure, or format, with no questions being asked or any expectations for the Council. Cllr M Khan recommended that the motion should be withdrawn and amended for a future meeting.

Cllr C Jennings withdrew the motion.

49. To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

There were no communications.

50. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council's Representative on the Didcot Garden Town Management Board

The Leader has requested a regular up-date with the DGT Officers to enable him to report back.

51. Questions to the Leader concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 58.

Q. Would the Leader support the continuation of financial aid to the Food Bank should it be requested from them? (Cllr S Nohre)

Cllr C Jennings explained that any application for funding or a grant from the Food Bank would be considered at a F&GP Committee meeting.

Q. *What are the leader's views regarding the recent SODC meeting regarding the HIF1 scheme, and can the leader explain why the group supported the scheme strongly at Town level, but not at District level?* (Cllr M Khan)

Cllr C Jennings explained that he was not a member of the group which voted on the motion at District level and could not give an accurate answer.

The meeting closed at 9.54pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: