

## South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 17 July 2014** in the Council Chamber.

(7.30 - 9.50 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Mike Best (Chairman)  
Councillor Carol Goodall (Vice-Chairman)

Cathy Bakewell	Brennie Halse	Wes Read
Dave Bulmer	Tim Inglefield	David Recardo
John Calvert	Andy Kendall	Sylvia Seal
Tim Carroll	Mike Lewis	Gina Seaton
Tony Capozzoli	Ian Martin	Peter Seib
Pauline Clarke	Nigel Mermagen	Angie Singleton
Nick Colbert	Graham Middleton	Andrew Turpin
John Dyke	Roy Mills	William Wallace
Tony Fife	Terry Mounter	Colin Winder
Nigel Gage	David Norris	Martin Wale
Jon Gleeson	Graham Oakes	Barry Walker
Dave Greene	Sue Osborne	Nick Weeks
Anna Groskop	Ric Pallister	
Peter Gubbins	Shane Pledger	

**Officers**

Ian Clarke	Corporate Director (Legal and Democratic Services)
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager
John Evans	Principal, Yeovil College
Andrew Gillespie	Area Development Manager (West)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)
Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)
Mark Williams	Chief Executive
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)

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### 21. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Beech, John V Chainey, Marcus Fysh, Henry Hobhouse, Jenny Kenton, Pauline Lock, Tony Lock, Paul Maxwell, Patrick Palmer, John Richardson, Ros Roderigo, Jo Roundell Greene, Sue Steele, Paul Thompson, Kim Turner, Linda Vijeh, Lucinda Wallace and Derek Yeomans.

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### 22. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th May 2014, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th May 2014 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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**23. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

Councillor John Calvert declared a personal but non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10, Treasury Management Activity Report 2013/14, as his son was employed by one of the Banks mentioned in the report.

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**24. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no members of the public present.

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**25. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

The Chairman advised that following the presentation at Council in May by Paul Mears of Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust on existing stroke services at the Hospital the decision had been made not to move all stroke services to Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton but to retain the services in both hospitals.

The Leader of Council read out a letter of thanks from Clarence House on behalf of the Prince of Wales, following his visit to Muchelney on 8th July 2014. He said the visit had boosted the morale of local people who were struggling with their insurance companies to resolve their flooding issues.

The Chairman also gave his thanks to all officers of the Council who had assisted in arranging the visit.

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**26. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 16)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council would take place on Thursday, 21st August 2014 in the Council Chamber, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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**27. Chairman's Engagements (Agenda Item 6)**

The list of Chairman's Engagements was noted.

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**28. Presentation of Yeovil College Strategic Plan 2014 - 17 (Agenda Item 7)**

The Chairman introduced Mr John Evans, Principal of Yeovil College, who provided Members with an entertaining and informative power point presentation of the College's current position and Strategic Plan for the next 3 years.

Mr Evans said the College's mission statement was to provide inspirational education and training for individuals, employers and the whole community. He listed their strategic aims as:-

- To inspire, be ambitious, respect and support our learners.
- To be recognised as a provider of choice.
- To maintain financial sustainability and manage the college effectively and efficiently.
- To work effectively with our partners to maximise growth opportunities and improve the experience for our learners.
- To value, attract and develop outstanding staff.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Evans replied:-

- Of the 5,000 students at the College, there were 200 studying full-time and 600 studying part-time who were over the age of 21.
- It was hoped the College would receive an 'outstanding' rating at its next Ofsted inspection due in 2017.
- Apprenticeships at the College covered a wide range of areas however, their challenge was to engage with employers and to constantly adapt the courses to match business needs.
- Enrichment activities, including music and performing arts were based at Northcott House on the College site.
- The College had a growth strategy and was working with schools in Chard and other parts of the district to encourage students to choose to study at Yeovil College rather than other further education facilities in the area.
- Transport to the College was an issue for students in remote areas and they were investigating the use of a wifi enable bus so that students could study on the journey to and from Yeovil.
- The College employed two full-time work experience co-ordinators to support both students and encourage employers to participate in the apprenticeship scheme.
- The popularity of foreign language courses was cyclical and it was certain that in the future they would be given more priority and funding by the Government.
- Vocational courses for 14 to 19 year old students which were targeted towards future employment opportunities had reduced but the College was in discussion with Yeovil District Hospital to see if this could be addressed in the future.
- Certain courses at the College started at 8.00am or 8.30am where students would be expected to start work at this time in their future employment, however,

other courses started at 10.00am and finished at 7.00pm. This recognised that employees would agree their working hours with their employer in the future.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked Mr Evans for attending and providing an interesting and entertaining presentation and debate.

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## **29. Annual Performance Report 2013/14 (Agenda Item 8)**

The Leader of Council, as Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy, drew Members attention to the three performance exceptions listed in the report. He noted that the staff sickness levels were distorted by a small number of long-term sick people who the Council would take a more targeted approach towards in the future.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that:-

- There were usually delays in issuing new Council Tax bills to people moving house around the annual billing period in April 2014.
- The District Executive Committee had recently agreed to contribute towards match funding with the other Councils in Somerset to provide superfast broadband to 95% of the district and it was hoped this would be targeted towards assisting small businesses in the area.

The Performance Manager agreed to provide a written request to a question relating to PI034 – the percentage of complaints resolved at stage 1 of the complaints procedure and PI037 – the number of full-time employees of SSDC.

The following response was subsequently provided by the Performance Manager:

PI 034 - [ % of complaints resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure] As you noted, the 2012/13 headline outturn figure was not compatible with the accompanying table. I can confirm that the table was correct and therefore the headline figure of 94.5% was incorrect. It should have read 92.18%. When compared to the 2013/14 figure of 94.12%, the trend was marginally better and not marginally worse as the report indicated. I am satisfied that this was the result of human error which should have been picked up much earlier. Many thanks for pointing it out.

PI 037(a) - [ Number of FTE's employed by SSDC Annual Snapshot ] - This figure fell from 440 to 424 and the trend was described as "improved". You wanted to know upon what this description was based as there was no commentary in the report. Although there is no target figure for a reduction of staffing levels, and in the absence of contra indicators such as a failure to recruit staff to key positions, a lower number of FTEs is regarded as an indicator of lower costs and/or improved efficiency. However, I agree that some explanation of this in the comments box would have been helpful and this should be included in future reports.

At the conclusion of the debate Members were pleased to note the Council's Annual Performance Report for 2013/14.

**RESOLVED:** That Council noted the 2013/14 Annual Council Performance report.

**Reason:** To confirm the Annual Performance report for 2013/14.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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**30. Request to Increase the number of Councillors on Lopen Parish Council - Community Governance Review (CGR) (Agenda Item 9)**

The Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) advised that the request from the Parish Council to increase the number of Councillors was logical and following consultation with local residents, if agreed, would take effect from May 2015

There was no debate and the recommendations were proposed and seconded and on being put to the vote, were carried (voting: unanimous in favour).

**RESOLVED:** That Council:-

1. Noted the receipt of the request from Lopen Parish Council to increase the number of Parish Councillors and its validity;
2. Agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Lopen;
3. Agreed the Terms of Reference of the review as detailed in Appendix A, including the timetable and arrangements for public consultation;
4. Agreed that the review will be carried out by the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with Ward Members, Area Development Manager (North) and the Area North Committee;
5. Noted that further reports would be brought to Council in order that decisions may be made in respect of draft proposals and final recommendations of the Review.

**Reason:** To agree the request (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) from Lopen Parish Council to conduct a Community Governance Review with a view to increase the size of the Parish Council from 5 to 7 Councillors.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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**31. Treasury Management Activity Report 2013/14 (Agenda Item 10)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning commended the report to Members and drew their attention to the Average Credit Risk Score graph which detailed the Council's exceptional return on treasury investment. He thanked the officers of the finance service for their work in achieving this.

Members were content to note the report.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

1. Noted the Treasury Management Activity for the 2013/14 financial year;

2. Noted the position of the individual prudential indicators for the 2013/14 financial year;
3. Noted the outlook for the investment performance in 2014/15.

**Reason:** To review the treasury management activity and the performance against the Prudential Indicators for the 2013/14 financial year as prescribed by the revised CIPFA Code of Practice and in accordance with the Council's Treasury Strategy and Annual Investment Policy and Treasury Management Practices.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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### **32. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 11)**

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the proposed Somerset Rivers Board would cover the whole river catchment area of South Somerset and a further report on the new Rivers Board would be presented in the Autumn.

The report of Executive Decisions was noted.

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### **33. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 12)**

The Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee advised that following discussion of an audit report on Section 106 planning obligations, a letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of Somerset County Council, to express the Committees concern at the lack of a system regulating the County Council's portion of Section 106 funding.

There followed a short discussion on the discharge of Section 106 planning obligations at Area Committees where some members felt the District Valuer should be in attendance at those meetings to explain their recommendations to release developers from certain obligations and other Members felt it was not a good use of officer time and that Ward Members should be aware of such issues.

At the conclusion of the debate the report was noted.

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### **34. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 13)**

The Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny drew Members attention to the Task and Finish review work which was nearing completion.

The report was noted.

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### **35. Motions (Agenda Item 14)**

There were no Motions submitted.

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**36. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 15)**

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

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Chairman

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Date