

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Brympton Way, YEOVIL, Somerset BA20 2HT on Thursday 4 June 2015.**

(9.30 am - 11.25 am)

**Present:**

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Carol Goodall	Sylvia Seal
Peter Gubbins	Peter Seib
Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton
Shane Pledger	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	

**Also Present:**

Clare Aparicio Paul	David Norris
Jason Baker	Sue Steele
Mike Beech	Colin Winder
Val Keitch	Derek Yeomans

**Officers**

Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Laurence Willis	Assistant Director (Environment)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Anuska Gilbert	Performance Officer
Kim Close	Assistant Director (Communities)
Vicki Dawson	Principal Environmental Protection Officer
Jo Wilkins	Policy Planner
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Matthew Ballard	Project Manager, Connecting Devon and Somerset
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

**Note:** All decisions were approved without dissent unless shown otherwise.

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**1. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 2 April 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

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**2. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Mark Williams, Chief Executive and Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director.

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

There were no declarations of interest made.

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

There were no members of the public present.

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

The Chairman asked the Committees agreement to vary the order of the reports to allow the Superfast Broadband report to be discussed first and this was agreed.

The Chairman also advised that the report extending the rights and criteria of Aldermen (agenda item 12) would be deferred for one month to allow the report to be discussed with the new party group leaders and new Portfolio Holder.

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### 6. **SSDC Annual Performance Report 2014/15 (Agenda Item 6)**

The Performance Officer introduced the report and drew Members attention to the Performance Indicators detailed in Appendix A of which 88% were on or above target for the year compared to 77% in the previous year. She also detailed the 31 council action plans completed and the 10 partially completed in Appendix B and the number of complaints received detailed in Appendix C, which were slightly higher than the previous year but taken in context of the number of public interactions was very low.

The Assistant Director (Economy) advised that the percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed (PI 003) although high, followed no discernable pattern. He said there had been a high number of planning applications submitted during 2014/15 and this led to a higher number of appeals against decisions. He noted the trend was improving during 2015.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, the Strategic Director (Place and Performance) confirmed that a Members Workshop on performance was planned shortly and the Performance Indicators would be reviewed at that time. She also advised that complaints relating to the Development Management service had reduced by 95% over the previous 4 years.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the contents of the Annual Performance Report and that it would be presented to Council.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive:-

1. noted the 2014/15 performance information detailed at Appendices A, B and C;
2. noted that the information in the report would be presented to

Council in July 2015.

**Reason:** To note and comment on the annual Performance Indicators (PIs), the status of the Council Plan actions and the summary of complaints made to SSDC during 2014-15

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## 7. 2014/15 Capital Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and drew Members attention to the future years capital programme. He regretted that post completion reports had not been completed for each completed capital scheme.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that:-

- The Infrastructure Reserve was reported in the Revenue Outturn report as £1m had been allocated from that budget and infrastructure projects would be brought forward on a case by case basis to District Executive.
- Appendix C detailed money received from developers as S106 contributions and the detailed breakdown of where this would be spent was held within the planning office.
- Some capital schemes took a long time to come to fruition and then a long time to complete but post completion reports would be completed.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive:-

- a. noted the spend of £2.244million on capital for the 2013/14 year and approve the financing of the capital programme (paragraph 6 and 18);
- b. noted the progress of individual capital schemes and the lead officers comments as detailed in Appendix A;
- c. approved the revisions, including profiling amendments to the Capital Programme for 2014/15 as detailed in paragraph 9;
- d. reviewed whether the projects which have a delayed start in excess of one year totalling £35,000 remain in the capital programme (paragraph 11);
- e. approved the virements of £46,000 outlined in paragraph 13
- f. approved the Revenue Contributions of £32,180 to Capital Projects outlined in paragraph 14;
- g. approved the return of the under spend of £25,000 on completed projects to capital balances (paragraph 15);

- h. noted the post completion reports on the completed schemes as detailed in Appendix B;

**Reason:** To review and confirm the outturn of the capital programme of the Council for 2013/14.

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## **8. 2014/15 Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 8)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that the overall underspend figure also included additional income from the planning service which had not been predicted and was not expected to continue.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that due to the changes in Business Rates from 1<sup>st</sup> April whereby SSDC kept a share (the Business Rate Retention Scheme), the Government had provided compensation for the various grants they had provided to businesses affected by flooding. She also confirmed that the budget underspend would be used to support the 2015/16 budget.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the 2014/15 revenue budget outturn as reported.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive:-

- a. noted the outturn position of £16,477,111 (an under spend of £1,403,919) and explanation of variances from budget holders for the 2014/15 financial year as shown in paragraphs 7-8;
- b. approved the carry forwards listed and recommended for approval by Management Board in Appendix B into the 2015/16 budgets;
- c. approved all overspends are funded from general balances;
- d. noted the use of the specific reserves in paragraph 21 and approve the set-up of a treasury management volatility as detailed in paragraph 9;
- e. noted the use of general fund balances in paragraph 22;
- f. noted the transfers to and from balances outlined in paragraph 25;
- g. noted the position of the Area Committee balances in paragraph 26;
- h. noted the virements in Appendix G;
- i. noted the stock write offs detailed in paragraph 29.

**Reason:** To review and confirm the outturn of the revenue budgets of the Council for 2014/15.

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## 9. Superfast Broadband Extension Programme - Decision on SSDC funding contributions (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development reminded Members of their 'in principle' decision to commit £640,000 to the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast (broadband) Extension Programme (SEP). She introduced Mr M Ballard, Project Manager for the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) scheme.

The Project Manager provided Members with an update on the increased Broadband connectivity in the area which had been achieved during Phase 1 of the project and the proposed prioritisation of business dense postcode areas in the second phase. He advised that the procurement timetable detailed at Appendix 1 had moved and the clarification meeting between CDS and BT had been moved to 30<sup>th</sup> June. He suggested that Members may wish to defer and delegate their decision, or, reconvene before 30<sup>th</sup> June to receive a more comprehensive report on which to base their decision, following signature of a non-disclosure agreement.

The Assistant Director (Economy) advised that it had been hoped to provide Members with the likely number of the premises to be connected in Phase 2 however as SSDC had not signed the original non-disclosure agreement with CDS the figures had not been provided.

In response to questions from Members, the Project Manager advised that:-

- SSDC had not been a contributing partner during Phase 1 of the CDS project and as the non-disclosure agreement had not been signed then commercially sensitive information could not be shared. If SSDC became a contributing partner in Phase 2 then the detail of what their contribution would cover could be shared with Executive Members.
- Phase 1 of CDS provided Superfast broadband to 90% of the CDS area. Phase 2 was proposed to raise this to 95% coverage across the area.
- There were around 10,000 premises remaining to be connected during the SEP Phase 2 within the South Somerset area and these were areas more challenging and complex to connect.
- Satellite broadband was not superior but it was a solution in isolated areas where fibre broadband was not possible.
- Funding provided by the European Union (EU) in Phase 2 was intended only for business connections.

During a lengthy discussion, Members felt that the additional information which would be provided to them following signature of a satisfactory non-disclosure agreement was essential in order to identify where the remaining 5% of premises which the project would focus on would be. It was proposed to defer the decision and convene a special joint meeting of the District Executive and Scrutiny Committees before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to reconsider the in principle commitment alongside additional detailed information on the programme, to be provided following the signature of a satisfactory non-disclosure agreement with Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS). This proposal was seconded and confirmed by all Members.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive agreed:-

1. to defer the decision to confirm the in-principle commitment of £640,000 to the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast (broadband) Extension Programme (SEP);
2. that the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to sign a satisfactory non-disclosure agreement with Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS);
3. to convene a special joint meeting of the District Executive and Scrutiny Committee before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 to re-consider the in principle commitment alongside additional detailed information on the programme to be provided in confidence.

**Reason:** To enable Members to make a fully informed decision to commit to the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast (broadband) Extension Programme (SEP).

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**10. ICT software upgrade to link Environmental Health (Civica system) with Customer First (indigo system), including integration of Streetscene Services (ESG system) (Agenda Item 10)**

The Assistant Director (Environment) explained the need to upgrade and integrate the Environmental Health and Streetscene IT systems with the Customers First IT system and he advised that the second recommendation would allow a flexible implementation of each system to best fit with the service.

During a brief discussion Members were pleased to see that staff training in the new IT system was planned and they were content to agree the recommendations.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive agreed:-

1. to allocate £33,000 from the ICT replacement fund to upgrade and integrate the Environmental Health and Streetscene IT systems and to link them to the Customer First IT system as detailed in the Project Brief in Appendix 1.
2. to delegate the final decision to proceed with the project to the Assistant Director (Environment) in consultation with the Director for Operations and Customer Focus and the Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change.

**Reason:** To upgrade and integrate the Environmental Health, and Streetscene IT systems and to link them to the Customer First IT system.

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**11. Designation of a Neighbourhood Area - Castle Cary and Ansford Parishes (Agenda Item 11)**

The Policy Planner advised that the two parishes of Castle Cary and Ansford had joined to form a single area for the purpose of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. She

confirmed that no representations had been received during the consultation period for the proposed neighbourhood area.

Members commended the proposal of the two parishes to work together on the production of a joint Neighbourhood Plan and were pleased to confirm the recommendations of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive agreed to designate the Civil Parishes of Castle Cary and Ansford as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Localism Act 2011.

**Reason:** To agree the formal designation of Castle Cary and Ansford Parishes as a single Neighbourhood Area in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

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## **12. Appointment of Honorary Aldermen - Agreement of Criteria and Rights (Agenda Item 12)**

The Chairman reminded Members that the report was deferred for one month to allow further consideration of its content with the new Portfolio Holder and Group Leaders.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive agreed to defer the report for one month to allow further consideration of its content with the new Portfolio Holder and Group Leaders.

**Reason:** To allow time for further consideration of the report by the new Portfolio Holder and political Group Leaders.

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## **13. Monthly Performance Snapshot (Agenda Item 13)**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Leisure advised that the Healthy Lifestyles team had received £334,000 in lottery funding towards promoting healthy lifestyles in the Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster areas to people diagnosed with diabetes, pre-diabetes or hypertension.

Members were pleased to note the monthly performance snapshot data.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive noted the monthly performance snapshot data.

**Reason:** The report is provided for members information.

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## **14. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 14)**

Members noted the following additions and amendments to the Executive Forward Plan:

- Disposal of land adjacent to Steep Holme, Penn Hill, Yeovil (Confidential) – July 2015
- Land adjacent to 1-4 St Johns Cottages, Charlton Musgrove – transfer to Parish Council – August 2015
- Adoption of the Revised County Wide Tenancy Strategy – moved to August 2015
- Adoption of a Revised Private Sector Housing Strategy – moved to September 2015

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following additions and amendments:-

- Disposal of land adjacent to Steep Holme, Penn Hill, Yeovil (Confidential) – July 2015
- Land adjacent to 1-4 St Johns Cottages, Charlton Musgrove – transfer to Parish Council – August 2015
- Adoption of the Revised County Wide Tenancy Strategy – moved to August 2015
- Adoption of a Revised Private Sector Housing Strategy – moved to September 2015

**Reason:** The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

**15. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 2 July 2015 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30am.

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Chairman

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Date