

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 3 December 2015.**

(9.35 am - 11.35 am)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

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

Also Present:

Jason Baker	Sue Steele
Mike Beech	Martin Wale
Val Keitch	Colin Winder
Tony Lock	Derek Yeomans

Officers

Rina Singh	Interim Chief Executive
Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director (Operations & Customer Focus)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Helen Rutter	Assistant Director (Communities)
David Crisfield	Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Anna-Maria Lenz	Performance Officer
Nigel Marston	Licensing Manager
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer
Kelly Wheeler	Democratic Services Officer

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

97. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 5th November 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

98. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Angie Singleton.

99. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Peter Gubbins declared a personal interest in agenda item 9, Report of the Licensing Task and Finish Group, as he is a member of Yeovil Town Council.

Councillor Henry Hobhouse declared a personal interest in item 9, Report of the Licensing Task and Finish Group as he has a Temporary Events Notice from SSDC.

100. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

101. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman reminded members that agenda item 8, the Heart of the South West Formal Devolution Bid had been withdrawn from the agenda. He provided an update on the situation and explained that the set of papers to go to all the authorities for debate was not ready to come forward at the current time.

In response to a question from a member on another subject, the Westlands Leisure Centre, the Chairman noted it was a fast moving picture and the final terms had yet to be agreed. The Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) reminded members it had been agreed that update reports would come forward to District Executive every three months, however she was happy to update members on a one to one basis if required.

102. Funding for Citizens Advice South Somerset 2016/17 (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report which set out the outcomes of a review of the organisation and sought approval of on the level funding to be included in the 2016-17 budget. She highlighted the organisation had changed its name to Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS), and introduced a representative from CASS, who was present to answer any questions if necessary. It was noted that CASS served the community well, and they worked closely with the SSDC Welfare Advice team to combine knowledge, but there was no duplication of work.

The Assistant Director (Communities), noted a very comprehensive review had been undertaken regarding activities of CASS. She explained that services needed to be delivered in a different way due to changes in circumstances and resources, and briefly highlighted key changes to the service. Reference was also made to a new service specification in the future.

In response to questions raised during discussion, the Assistant Director (Communities), the Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator and the representative from CASS clarified that:

- CASS was still affiliated to the national network of Citizens Advice, and the name change reflected a national change to drop the word 'bureau'.
- Acknowledgement that accessing central government funding was an issue, but locally, funding for certain specific projects could be bid for.

- There had been no apparent reduction in case loads as a result of the name change.

In response to comments raised by Scrutiny Committee, the Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator noted that:

- The SSDC grant currently represented 22% of turnover, but from the end of next year would represent around 35%, and CASS were constantly looking for alternative funding sources.
- SSDC do charge rent and a service charge for the office space at Petters Way and would also do so when another CASS office is set up at the Boden Centre in Chard.
- There was no duplication of work with the SSDC Welfare Advice team but there is additional capacity, and protocols were in place to check if clients were working with both.
- The new service specification was close to being finalised.

Members thanked, and congratulated the team at CASS on the work achieved to date, and were content to allocate the funding in the 2016/17 budget.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. agreed to an allocation of £121,730 for Citizens Advice South Somerset (formerly known as South Somerset Citizens Advice Bureau) in the 2016/17 budget.
2. noted that funding would be reviewed annually and be subject to the implementation of a new service specification that would require a series of service improvements to deliver improved outcomes for South Somerset residents.

Reason: To note the outcomes of a review of Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS) and to approve the level of funding to be included in the 2016-17 budget.

103. Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report - 2nd Quarter 2015/16 (Agenda Item 7)

The Performance Manager introduced the new Performance Officer, who then presented the report to members highlighting three performance indicators of interest PI010, PI031 and PI029. The Performance Manager noted that new software was due to be installed to monitor performance of the call centre and a further report was due to be made to Scrutiny Committee in January.

The Scrutiny Chairman, commented that members sought clarification as to what steps were being taken to address the increase in PI 029. Members had also noted a report was due to District Executive in the new year regarding transforming customer handling within SSDC.

The Portfolio Holder for Area South explained the nature of the increase in complaints at the Crematorium. During a brief discussion members and officers gave suggested explanations for changes in other performance indicators.

At the conclusion of discussion, the Chairman noted that a message would be circulated to all members when the software for monitoring of performance of the call was back in place.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the corporate performance monitoring report.

Reason: To review the corporate performance monitoring report covering the period from 1st July – 30th September 2015 (Q2).

104. Heart of the South West Formal Devolution Bid (Agenda Item 8)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

105. Report of the Licensing Task and Finish Group (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group provided a brief overview of the report and the work undertaken. He explained they had met with representatives from Wincanton and Yeovil Town Councils, and one was happy to stop the delegated work whilst the other was not so keen. There had been much work and discussion about fees and in several cases they did not cover SSDC costs. He highlighted that regarding town council delegation enforcement was an issue, as SSDC did the enforcing but the fees were taken by another authority.

Scrutiny Committee endorsed all the recommendations and noted that should delegation arrangements with Wincanton Town Council cease, arrangements had already been put in place to allow taxi drivers to liaise with SSDC Customer Services staff based at Churchfields.

In response to comments raised during discussion, the Licensing Manager clarified that:

- Ideally SSDC need to look at reducing some fees and raising others.
- SSDC policy was that stall holders in a designated market which acquired this status by virtue of a grant, enactment or order, were not considered to be street traders.
- SSDC were the only authority nationally, who delegated the taxi licensing function.

At the end of discussion the Chairman noted he would also raise the issue of licensing fees at the District Councils Network (DCN). Members were content to approve the recommendations and to endorse recommendation 1 for final confirmation by Full Council.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. recommend to Council that 6 months' notice be given to both Yeovil and Wincanton Town Councils, in accordance with the Delegation Agreement, to terminate all delegated Licensing functions. Upon the expiry of the 6 month period, the relevant Licensing functions will be carried out by the Licensing team of

SSDC.

2. noted the findings of the Task and Finish Group in relation to the over or under recovery of fees and charges within the Licensing Service and in particular endorse the principle of total cost recovery where possible.
3. recommend that SSDC lobby via the LGA for Government to reassess all Statutory fees in relation to Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005.
4. noted that further work would be carried out by the Licensing Manager and the Financial Services Team to present an amended set of fees and charges to be recommended via the budget setting process, prior to inclusion in the budget proposals for 2016/17

Reason: To present the findings of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group established to investigate various aspects of South Somerset District Council's Licensing Service.

106. Yeovil Innovation Centre - Business Plan and Update Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder (Environment and Economic Development) introduced the report as detailed in the agenda, and the Economic Development Manager provided a presentation giving a brief history of the site and concept, achievements to date and examples of some of the tenants and types of businesses now operating from the centre. The presentation included highlights about:

- Occupancy rates and the 4-year criteria regarding 'churning' was becoming more relevant
- Tenant satisfaction
- Project outputs, job creation and financial projections
- Making a profit since 2013 and now recovering our earlier losses
- Proposals for a phase 2 in the future

In response to comments raised during discussion, the Economic Development Manager noted that:

- The team were assessing the wider impact on the local economy of the businesses based at the centre.
- The rental space at the centre was not subsidised, and had been set independently by the District Valuer with rental values reflecting the higher end of the Yeovil rental market.
- With the exception of the anchor tenants, tenants were not leaseholders but held a licence on a rolling 28 days basis. Businesses could give just 28 days notice and leave.
- Superfast broadband was available at the centre and business support provided for the tenants where required.
- SSDC Property Services had compiled the maintenance plan and schedule for the building and so there should not be any surprises for maintenance work required.

Some members expressed the concern that there was a need for similar workplaces in centres outside of Yeovil. In response, the Interim Chief Executive noted there would be a meeting shortly to discuss the issue of workspaces across the district.

At the conclusion of debate, members were content to approve all recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. noted the detail provided on the performance of Yeovil Innovation Centre.
2. approved the Yeovil Innovation Centre (YIC) Business Plan for 2015-20 (attached as Appendix A).
3. agreed a continued period of operation of YIC by SSDC (as described in paragraph 5.2).

Reason: To formally adopt the new Yeovil Innovation Centre (YIC) Business Plan 2015- 2020 and to agree that SSDC continue as Operator at the Centre.

107. Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision: The transfer of two sections of SSDC land needed to conclude the Horsey Roundabout improvements, Yeovil by 30 November 2015 (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman introduced the report and there being no further discussion members were content to note the decision taken.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted that, according to the provision of Part 3 Section 6(4) and Part 4, paragraph 34.1 of the Constitution, the Acting Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management agreed to make an urgent decision to authorise the freehold transfer of the areas identified on the plan, coloured red, to Somerset County Council for the consideration payment of £15,000. Somerset County Council will pay the District Councils legal and professional costs incurred as a result of this transaction and that the land to be transferred to Somerset County Council will include the newly constructed boundary wall.

Reason: To note the urgent decision taken to agree the land transfer of two sections of the Councils land, at Brunswick Street Car Park and Hendford Hill in Yeovil, to Somerset County Council in order to enable them to conclude Highways Horsey Roundabout, footpath and cycleway improvement.

108. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12)

In response to comments made by Scrutiny, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) noted that the Motion raised at Council in September to investigate the possibility of two hours free car parking would be part of the Budget update report

presented to District Executive in January 2016. The Chairman noted a report on the new Council Plan would not come forward until at least February as officers were waiting to understand fully the implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review and a statement was not due to be made until mid-December.

The Chairman informed members of amendments to the forward plan which included two new reports for January and February and a revised date for the County Wide Tenancy Strategy report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;

New reports for 7th January 2016:

- Leasing of 72 South Street, Yeovil
- Approval of the Somerset District Authorities Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy 2015-2020 and Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy 2015-2020.

New reports for 4th February 2016:

- Somerset Waste Board Business Plan
- New Waste Collection Model

Revised date:

- Adoption of the County Wide Tenancy Strategy report - moved to the February 2016.

2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

109. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 7th January 2016 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date