

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 February 2016.**

(9.30 am - 12.45 pm)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Carol Goodall	Peter Seib
Peter Gubbins	Angie Singleton
Henry Hobhouse	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	

Also Present:

Neil Bloomfield	Graham Middleton
John Clark	Gina Seaton
Nigel Gage	Sue Steele
Mike Lewis	Martin Wale
Tony Lock	Colin Winder

Officers

Vega Sturgess	Interim Chief Executive
Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place & Performance)
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Steve Joel	Assistant Director (Health & Well-Being)
Helen Rutter	Assistant Director (Communities)
Paul Wheatley	Principal Spatial Planner
Lynda Pincombe	Community Health & Leisure Manager
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
David Crisfield	Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Steve Read	Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership
Catherine Nolan	South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

125. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 7th January 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

126. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shane Pledger and Sylvia Seal.

127. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made.

128. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

Mr Geoff Cole, Chairman of Yeovil Athletics Club, spoke in support of the capital bid to upgrade the Joanna France building and the Bill Whistlecroft Athletics Arena at Yeovil Recreation Ground (Agenda item 7 – Revenue Budget 2016/17 – Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme). He said the club had been established for 45 years and they had a growing membership so there was a need to upgrade their facilities.

Mr Justin Bennett of East Coker Parish Council spoke regarding Agenda item 11 – Community Infrastructure Levy – Draft Charging Schedule. He said the suggestion in the proposed charging schedule to have a zero Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions was very concerning to them. Although he had spoken to officers regarding the proposal, he felt that a combination of Section 106 obligation and CIL would be more binding on developers and would allow for low cost housing.

129. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman advised that he and the Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) had attended a public event about improvements to the Sowey river and King Sedgemoor Drain the previous day.

He had also taken a drive around Yeovil in the company of the SSC Councillor and the County Highway Officer to view the potential problems which could occur during the road improvements at the Hospital roundabout.

130. Somerset Waste Partnership - Draft Business Plan 2016-21 (Agenda Item 6)

Mr Steve Read, Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP), provided Members with a short presentation on the Recycle More kerbside recycling to be started shortly within the SSDC area, the renegotiation of their contract with Viridor and other waste providers as an alternative to using landfill sites, and the number of waste minimisation activities being undertaken by them.

In response to questions from Members, the Managing Director advised:-

- The move to a 3 weekly collection of household waste had the potential to save thousands of pounds once agreement had been reached with a contractor.
- A new law which prohibits charging the public to use Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) had recently been introduced and the Partnership had until 2020 to cease charging at Crewkerne HWRC. Prior to this happening, local consultation would take place.
- It was currently possible to register two vehicles per household who could use the HWRC's.

- Viridor were seeking to consolidate their 11 landfill sites across the country into 3 and one would probably be at Wallpole in Somerset, so, it was inevitable that the Dimmer site would close eventually.
- The aging fleet of collection vehicles inevitably required more maintenance which sometimes impacted upon waste collection rounds and he would speak to the contractor regarding the impact of missed collections on Fridays.
- If Viridor did not secure the Somerset Waste Partnership's contract then the site at Dimmer would still remain a commercial facility and although there would be restrictions on the tonnage of waste, it would not be restricted to receiving waste from a geographical area.
- Transferring waste by rail was not economically viable within the Somerset Waste Partnership.
- The Carymoor Environmental Centre provided educational waste training for school groups as budget restrictions had pared back this work by the SWP.
- Somerset County Council arranged for the removal of fly-tipped asbestos and plaster board and they accepted this as a small risk.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development thanked the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership for attending and answering Members questions. She also noted that Members could speak at their Town and Parish Council meetings to encourage more recycling in their communities. The majority of Members were content to confirm the Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan 2016-21 on behalf of the authority.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive approved the Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan 2016-21 on behalf of the authority.

Reason: To agree the Somerset Waste Partnership's Business Plan 2016-21.

(Voting: 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

131. Revenue Budget 2016/17 - Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and noted that the overall budget had reduced by 28% in real time cash savings compared to the 2008/09 budget, with no reduction in front line services. He also drew Members attention to the proposed 1.95% increase in Council Tax and the 1.25% for the Somerset Rivers Authority.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that the impact of recent business rate appeals was affecting the Council's reserves, however there were still sufficient balances to meet risks.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, it was confirmed that:-

- The Rural Service Delivery Grant was £32,000 in the current financial year and was expected to be £41,000 in the next financial year.
- Optimising future Council income would form a central part of the new Council Plan which would be finalised following the decision to join with Sedgemoor DC.
- The risk of business rate appeals coming forward from NHS Trusts was significant.

- Further information on the money allocated to the transformation project would be presented at the next District Executive meeting on 3rd March 2016.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and Chairman confirmed that:-

- The £2.5 million set aside for transformation would be funded from capital reserves.
- Although the Motion at Council to investigate a free period of up to two hours free parking in SSDC car parks was not taken forward in the budget, the automatic number plate recognition system due to be introduced would allow more intelligent parking systems in the future.
- There was no restriction to a list of preferred contractors on large SSDC procurement contracts.
- SSDC was signed up to the Prompt Payment Code to pay suppliers on time.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) agreed to provide a briefing note on the Council's Procurement Policy and to provide statistics on the Council's prompt payments to contractors.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive recommended to Council:

- a. approval of the overall Revenue Budget for 2016/17 of **£17,291,300** and the Revenue Account Summary as shown at Appendix A and note future year projections outlined in paragraph 44;
- b. approval of the detailed budgets for the District Executive and four Area Committees as shown at Appendix B;
- c. approve the increase of 1.95% (£2.88 per annum) in the Council Tax for 2016/17 for South Somerset District Council, which will result in a Band D charge of **£150.63**;
- d. approve a further increase of 1.25% (£1.85 per annum) to cover the precept for the Somerset Rivers Authority, producing an overall increase of 3.2% (£4.73 per annum) in the Council Tax for 2016/17 for South Somerset District Council, which will result in an overall Band D charge of **£152.48**;
- e. approve a further increase of 1.25% (£1.85 per annum) to cover the precept for the Somerset Rivers Authority, producing an overall increase of 3.2% (£4.73 per annum) in the Council Tax for 2016/17 for South Somerset District Council, which will result in an overall Band D charge of £152.48;
- f. approval of the savings proposals in Appendix D in conjunction with the Equalities Impact Schedule at Appendix F;
- g. approve the once-off items of expenditure as shown in Appendix E;
- h. note the current position and future estimation of reserves and

balances as shown in paragraphs 69-72;

- i. approval of the revised Capital Programme as shown in Appendix H;
- j. approval of the new schemes to be included in the Capital Programme as shown in Appendix I;
- k. note the scoring of new capital schemes outlined in Appendix K;
- l. note the proposed funding of the Capital Programme as shown in paragraph 83;
- m. note the detailed Capital Investment appraisal forms for new schemes, as shown at Appendix J;
- n. approve the setting aside of £2.5 million from capital reserves for transformation costs to be delegated to District Executive;
- o. approval in principle the use of new capital receipts to fund revenue costs pending a detailed report to District Executive.

Reason: To seek approval for the proposed 2016/17 Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Plan (Revenue Budgets for 2016/17 to 2020/21) and the Capital Programme that will be recommended to Full Council.

132. Funding for South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) 2016/17 (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman noted that the SSVCA were one of two organisations grant supported each year as they provided services to the community which SSDC did not.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that a review of the funding options for the SSVCA had taken place and it was proposed that SSDC now only provided core funding for the organisation in the future. A new funding report for 2017/18 would be presented to District Executive in January 2017 with a reduced funding figure.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Assistant Director (Communities) advised that the work of the SSVCA differed from the Community Council for Somerset who provided an excellent village hall advisory service within the SSDC area.

Ms Catherine Nolan of the SSVCA thanked Members for their support to the organisation. She said the voluntary sector was facing a challenging time as statutory services started to rely upon them. Small groups often operated on less than £10,000 per year and the SSVCA gave them the skills and support to continue and to access funding. They also held a database of voluntary groups to which potential volunteers could be matched to and they also acted as a conduit at a strategic level to build links between unrelated groups.

The Third Sector and Partnership Co-ordinator said it was crucial to keep the SSVCA as they were the infrastructure behind many voluntary groups and although this was an important organisation, its reliance on local authority funding should be reduced.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the proposed allocation of funding to the SSVCA for 2016/17.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

- a. agreed to an allocation of £74,260 for South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action (SSVCA) in the 2016/17 budget.
- b. noted that funding would be reviewed annually and be subject to the implementation of a new service specification that will require a series of service improvements that will deliver improved outcomes for South Somerset's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.

Reason: To seek the approval of the District Executive on the level of funding to be included in the 2016-17 budget.

133. 2015/16 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2015 (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report, noting that the Section 106 deposits by developers was likely to change as building projects were completed.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that there was an agreement with the Joint Cemetery and Crematorium Committee where SSSDC retained the crematorium income in return for funding their capital programme.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee noted that they had the ability to review the outstanding capital projects on a quarterly basis.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

- a. approved the revised capital programme spend as detailed in paragraph 6;
- b. noted the slippage over £50,000 in the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 8;
- c. approved the virements of £25,000 outline in paragraph 9;
- d. approved the allocation of any additional funding to be used within the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 11;

- e. noted the balance of S106 deposits by developers held in paragraph 13;
- f. noted the current position with regard to funds held by the Wessex Home Improvement Loans as detailed in paragraph 15;
- g. noted the progress of individual capital schemes as detailed in Appendix A;
- h. noted the total land disposals to registered social landlords as detailed in Appendix B;
- i. noted the schemes that were approved prior to 2010, as detailed in Appendix C, and confirm approval for those projects that they wish to remain in the programme.

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the capital programme of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved budgets for the period 1st October 2015 to 31st December 2015.

134. 2015/16 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2015 (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report, noting that there was a small underspend forecast and the recommendations were to be noted.

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

- The loss of car parking spaces at Horsey Lane would equate to a cost of approximately £5,000p.a. income.
- The Council Tax collection rate had exceeded the previous years rate which was due to the four additional Revenue staff employed.
- Members could decide when the budget outturn report was presented if they wished to retain the SSDC Flood Reserve in light of the Somerset Rivers authority precept.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

- a. noted the current 2015/16 financial position of the Council;
- b. noted the reasons for variations to the previously approved Directorate Budgets as detailed in paragraphs 3.2;
- c. noted the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 11.1 and the position of the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in

Appendix D;

- d. noted the virements made under delegated authority as detailed in Appendix B;

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the revenue budgets of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved budgets for the period 1st April to 31st December 2015.

135. Community Infrastructure Levy - Draft Charging Schedule (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) emphasised that the proposed draft charging schedule was for consultation and any changes would be evidenced based and subject to examination and approval by an independent inspector.

The Principal Spatial Planner drew Members attention to the proposed Draft Charging Schedule on page 278 of the agenda which proposed a zero levy of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on development at the Yeovil Sustainable Urban Extensions and the Chard Eastern Development Area. All other residential development would attract £40 per sqm. He also noted the proposed draft instalment policy which would allow both SSDC and developers to manage the CIL payments due. The consultation period would be 6 weeks in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

In response to questions, the Principal Spatial Planner advised:-

- Larger development sites with significant on-site construction costs and on-site infrastructure costs could be rendered unviable by CIL contributions therefore it was proposed to have Section 106 for these sites.
- Self-build developments were exempt from CIL but they would have to go through a process to prove that they were self-builders.
- The purpose of CIL was to help mitigate the impact of development in an area and the concept of Community Benefit from development did not exist.
- The two development sites proposed for Yeovil were so significant that the imposition of CIL would make them unviable and so they would not occur.

It was noted that the consultation responses would be presented to the District Executive and a further debate could be held then. It was also requested that Plain English be added to the document wherever possible. At the conclusion of the debate Members were content to confirm the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. endorsed the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation (**See Appendix A**); and
2. delegated responsibility to the Assistant Director for Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to make any final minor text amendments which may be necessary to enable the Draft Charging Schedule to be published for formal

public consultation.

Reason: To endorse the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule so that it can be subject to public consultation for a period of six weeks from 10th February to the 24th March 2016.

136. Westland Leisure Complex - Progress Report (Agenda Item 12)

The Assistant Director (Leisure and Culture) advised that the Chairman of Finnmeccanica was expected to sign the lease agreement with SSDC imminently. Grant funding was almost secured from Sport England and Badminton England to refurbish facilities at the site and discussions were taking place with the England County Cricket Board to refurbish the cricket pavilion. The Heads of Terms and Business Plan would be presented to District Executive in March 2016 as there had been some changes to the terms previously agreed.

During discussion, it was noted that:-

- It was disappointing that Brympton Parish Council had declined to contribute to the project.
- SSDC would apply for a license for the site at the appropriate time.
- A further update report was due to be presented at the Area South Committee in March 2016.
- A press release should be issued when the lease agreement was signed which would also provide an update to local clubs and societies and could give an indication when the sporting facilities were likely to re-open.
- If energy saving measures were introduced at the site during the refurbishment there would considerable savings in energy.

At the conclusion of the debate Members were pleased to note the progress report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the new project governance arrangements and progress made in delivering the Westlands Leisure Complex Project.

Reason: To provide a summary of the progress in delivering the Westlands Leisure Complex Project.

137. The Proposed Leasing of 72 South Street, Yeovil (Agenda Item 13)

The Chairman introduced the report and asked if Members had any questions.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee confirmed they were pleased to see the reuse of the building.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed, subject to the outcome of successful negotiations on the rear access rights with Yarlington Housing Group, to approve:-

1. The granting of a full repairing lease on 72 South Street, Yeovil for 15 years to Somerset Care & Repair subject to break clauses after five years.
2. A requirement for Somerset Care & Repair to pay a rent of £600 per month during the lease period to SSDC, and to ensure that the new flats to be converted are occupied by council nominated tenants at LHA rental rates.
3. The addition of £7,200 to the 17/18 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Reason: To seek approval to lease 72 South Street, Yeovil, BA20 1QT to Somerset Care & Repair.

138. Transfer of responsibility for pathways and footbridge at Cocklemoor, Langport (Agenda Item 14)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised the report proposed the transfer of licences and land to the Langport Town Council.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. authorised the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) and the Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) to secure the transfer of full future ownership and maintenance responsibility for the two pathways and footbridge at Cocklemoor, Langport as indicated on the plan at Appendix A by early determination of existing leases or other arrangement to achieve that outcome together with the payment of one-off grant of £5,000 from General Fund Balances on completion to Langport Town Council.
2. noted that the Langport Town Council's request is subject to the successful acquisition of Cocklemoor from the Environment Agency.

Reason: To seek approval to transfer the District Council's ownership and maintenance responsibilities for two footpaths and a linked pedestrian bridge at Cocklemoor, Langport

139. Monthly News Snapshot (Agenda Item 15)

Members were content to note the monthly news snapshot information.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the monthly news snapshot information.

Reason: The report is provided for members information.

140. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 16)

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

- Westland Leisure Complex update – March 2016
- Somerset Waste Partnership New Waste Collection Model – move to April 2016

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Westland Leisure Complex update – March 2016
 - Somerset Waste Partnership New Waste Collection Model – move to April 2016
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document

141. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 17)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 3rd March 2016 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date