

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 17 March 2016** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT.

(7.30 pm - 8.40 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Mike Best (Chairman)  
Councillor Tony Capozzoli (Vice-Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Peter Gubbins	David Recardo
Jason Baker	Kaysar Hussain	Jo Roundell Greene
Marcus Barrett	Andy Kendall	Sylvia Seal
Mike Beech	Jenny Kenton	Peter Seib
Neil Bloomfield	Mike Lewis	Angie Singleton
Amanda Broom	Sarah Lindsay	Alan Smith
Dave Bulmer	Mike Lock	Sue Steele
John Clark	Paul Maxwell	Rob Stickland
Nick Colbert	Graham Middleton	Andrew Turpin
Adam Dance	Graham Oakes	Linda Vijeh
Sarah Dyke-Bracher	Sue Osborne	Martin Wale
John Field	Ric Pallister	William Wallace
Nigel Gage	Shane Pledger	Nick Weeks
Carol Goodall	Crispin Raikes	Colin Winder
Anna Groskop	Wes Read	Derek Yeomans

**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)
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer
Jo Boucher	Democratic Services Officer
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Charlotte Jones	Performance Manager

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cathy Bakewell, Henry Hobhouse, Tim Inglefield, Val Keitch, Tony Lock, Sam McAllister, David Norris, Tiffany Osborne, Stephen Page, Dean Ruddle, Garry Shortland and Gina Seaton.

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### 123. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

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

There were no declarations on interest.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

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

Councillor David Recardo informed members that Yeovil Hospital Charity had won the ITV and National Lottery's People's Projects collecting over £48,000 for a bid for a special unit for Activities for Older Patients at Yeovil District Hospital.

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#### **127. Chairman's Engagements (Agenda Item 6)**

The list of Chairman's Engagements was noted.

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#### **128. SSDC Transformation Programme (Agenda Item 7)**

The Leader of Council introduced the report and noted that if approved this decision would be the biggest decision the authority had made for some time. He acknowledged it would not be without risk but no matter what option was taken, the funding shortfall for future years would need to be found. He said there were experiences to draw on from elsewhere and SSDC would design its own model.

He explained that the programme would provide substantial savings that were necessary and would enhance the customer experience and provide a better service to the public. He appreciated that communication was key to staff and that all members should be engaged in the process to focus on and improve and maintain the services to the public.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation explained to members in more detail the recommendations as set out in the agenda report and that the programme would help release both staff and financial resources to work on priorities such as income generation. She recognised the risks involved but referred to the robust risk assessment and how the programme would not only become beneficial financially but provide a better service to the public.

She further explained aspects of the report in more detail including:

- The key issues identified to address for a future change programme.
- Benefits of the Transformation Programme.
- Timescale of the implementation of the Future Model.
- Breakdown of budget and estimated costs and savings.
- Headline risk assessment.

In conclusion the Portfolio Holder for Transformation thanked the Officers for the huge amount of work on the research and services of the authority and asked that all members support the Transformation Programme.

The Leader of Council referred to the membership of the Transformation Programme Board and suggested that along with Councillors Tim Inglefield and Sue Steele two additional non-executive members should also be appointed to the board (4 non-executive members in total). He explained that in agreement with both group leaders it was requested that any member who may wish to take up the position are asked to inform their group leaders as soon as possible in order that a decision can be made.

In response to questions, members were informed that:

- Appreciate that this programme will be a journey and at no point will there be a final picture as it is being designed along the way to fit the purpose of SSDC. However acknowledge that there will be decisions that need to be made at some points in order for the process to evolve.
- The Lean process was taken service by service and after having achieved a great deal the technology is now available to go further. SSDC are now in a position to remodel the organisation and look at efficiencies across the board. It is understood to look at maximum waste and duplication first.
- We are not contracting out and will look to do the vast majority in house but there is the possibility to bring in additional expertise if required.
- Appreciate mistakes cannot always be avoided however guarantee that the Programme Board will take extreme care and time in making every decision.
- Appreciate not all members of the public are entirely comfortable with digital. The idea is to encourage on-line and self-serve and reducing the avoidable contact however there will be other forms of communication should it be required.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) also explained to members how the salary savings of £2million over the five years was shown on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Councillor Sue Steele Chairman of Scrutiny Committee wished to highlight to members that Recommendation 3 as set out in the agenda report gives the Leader and Programme Board the ability to spend over £2million to deliver the Transformation Programme without any call back to Scrutiny or the public.

The Portfolio Holder for Transformation reassured members that any decisions made will go through the usual rigorous procurement process. The Programme Board will also have ability to bring any decisions back to either District Executive or Full Council if they so wish.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) also confirmed that both Financial Procedures and Procurement Procedures still stand under the SSDC Constitution and therefore any decision such as changes to pay, term of conditions would be outside the remit of programme board and will have to come back to committee for final decision.

During further discussion, other comments included:

- Support the transformation programme and confident it will work, however there was nervousness and concern as don't know the overall structure of the Council when going into the programme.
- Ensure to appoint the right person to supervise the overall contract and that penalty clauses are written in to any contractual agreements.
- Needs to be a perfect system and all services need to be done well.
- Present system should be retained until such time the new one has been proved in all circumstances, you cannot patch and fill.
- Hugely beneficial to SSDC with the outcome of a more efficient service to the members of the public.
- Selecting the right IT will be key.

At the conclusion of the debate the majority of Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report. On being put to the vote this was carried by 45 votes in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

- (i) Accepted the Headline Business Case for Transformation, attached in Appendix A including the vision and principles for transformation and noted the headline risks, and equality impact assessment included in this report
- (ii) Agreed the Transformation Programme governance arrangements as set out in section 6 of this report.
- (iii) Delegated authority to deliver the Programme to the Leader of the Council with the approval of the Programme Board.
- (iv) Approved that savings of £2,000,000 be added to the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 and 2018/19.
- (v) Approved that £59,975 for ongoing software maintenance costs is added to the Medium Term Financial Plan as an ongoing commitment from 2017/18.
- (vi) Approved that the £394,000 currently held in the Voluntary Redundancy Reserve is transferred to a new Transformation Reserve to fund this programme.
- (vii) Allocated £1,314,300 from capital receipts set aside in the budget for transformation to fund this programme.
- (viii) Agreed that the further revenue cost of £2,754,000 is funded from the Revenue Support Reserve.

**Reason:** To approve the principles and vision for the Council Transformation programme that will lead to the adoption of a new operating model.

*(Voting: 45 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions)*

### **129. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 8)**

The Leader of Council drew Members attention to the Portfolio Holder and invited any questions from members.

In response to questions, members were informed that:-

- The Council Plan would be presented to Scrutiny Committee and District Executive at the beginning of April before confirmation by Full Council.
- Updates would be made to the Medium Term Financial Plan in line with the decisions made at this Full Council.
- Appreciate the concern regarding the procedure of Disposal of Property from Yarlington, however SSDC do not have the power to stop any disposal from Yarlington.

At the conclusion of the debate the report of Executive Decisions was noted.

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### **130. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 9)**

Councillor Derek Yeomans, Chairman of the Audit Committee, introduced the report and reminded members that there would be a training session following the close of the next Audit meeting and encouraged members to attend.

There were no questions and the report of the Audit Committee was noted.

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### **131. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 10)**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee referred to the Task & Finish Reviews and informed members that the first meeting of the Consent for disposal/Rural Lettings Policy had taken place. She also advised that two more Task & Finish Reviews were approaching and would be looking for volunteers. She believed it would provide an excellent opportunity for members to learn more about the work and services of the authority.

The report of the Scrutiny Committee was noted.

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### **132. Motions (Agenda Item 11)**

There were no Motions submitted.

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### **133. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 12)**

The following question was submitted by Councillor Mike Beech on behalf of Councillor Dean Ruddle under Procedure Rule 10:-

**Regarding planning application 15/04331/S73 in Somerton, can we have an explanation as to why there is a £40,273 S.106 contribution towards a new studio**

**theatre at the Octagon or towards the stage refit at the Westlands entertainment complex given that as far as we know no contracts had at that time been signed regarding Westlands?**

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture responded with the following:-

Under SDDC policies the use of Section 106 contributions requested from developers are used for Strategic Facilities. The Council sought contribution towards either the Octagon Theatre or stage refit of the Westlands Leisure Complex. She explained that this money can only be spent on these facilities and deploying both options reduces the risk of contributions remaining unspent and needing to be returned to the developer.

In response Councillor Mike Beech asked a supplementary question; 'Are we up to the pooling limit for the Octagon Theatre?'

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture agreed to provide further information to Councillor Mike Beech in due course.

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**134. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Full Council would take place on **Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016** in the Council Chamber, Brympton Way, Yeovil **commencing at 7.30pm.**

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Chairman

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Date