

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Thursday 2 June 2016.**

(9.30 am - 11.00 am)

Present:

Councillor Jo Roundell Greene (Chairman)

Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Sylvia Seal

Peter Seib
Angie Singleton
Nick Weeks

Also Present:

Mike Beech
Amanda Broom
Dave Bulmer
Mike Lewis

Tony Lock
Sue Steele
Martin Wale

Officers

Rina Singh
Donna Parham
Helen Rutter
Andrew Gillespie
Anna-Maria Lenz
Kirsty Larkins
Vicki Dawson
David Crisfield
Angela Cox

Interim Chief Executive
Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Assistant Director (Communities)
Performance Manager
Performance Officer
Housing and Welfare Manager
Principal Environmental Protection Officer
Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator
Democratic Services Manager

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

7. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 12th May 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

8. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clare Aparicio Paul, Ric Pallister and Vega Sturgess (Strategic Director).

9. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

At the time the item was to be discussed, Councillor Peter Seib declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 12: Increase in Councillors on Brympton Parish

Council – Community Governance Review, as a member of Brympton Parish Council. He left the room during consideration of this item.

10. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

11. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Sue Steele reported that Musgrove Park Hospital had been inspected by the Care Quality Commission and received an overall rating of good. They had been rated as outstanding for the staffing, however, there had been some issues in the A&E department.

Councillor Sylvia Seal reported that SSDC had taken possession of the keys to the Westland Leisure Complex the previous Friday (27th May). She said that she had received a number of telephone calls from the public to say they were pleased that the Council had taken over the complex.

12. Verbal Update on recruitment of Chief Executive Officer (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman advised that the Appointments Committee had met twice and had evaluated the recruitment agencies to be used and had selected Penna. This agency were now finalising the advertisement which would be published the following week. It was hoped that the selection and final interview process would take place during July and an appointment would be made at the end of July 2016.

13. SSDC Annual Performance Report 2015/16 (Agenda Item 7)

The Performance Manager advised that the report detailed the annual summaries on Council Plan actions, the Performance Indicators and the complaints made during 2015-16.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee:-

- expressed their concerns at the number of partially completed actions for the Economic Development team and requested that they attend Scrutiny Committee to discuss the issues and as they would like to work with the team to identify any obstacles and potential solutions.
- also requested that the Scrutiny Committee be kept updated on Council Plan action C1.12 relating to the regeneration of the former ACI site in Chard.
- concluded by expressing their disappointment at the lack of data available on the Contact Centre telephony system (PI 031) and questioned how the authority would manage the technical challenge of implementing transformation.

The Chairman responded that at the current time, there was no update to the regeneration of the former ACI site in Chard.

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change confirmed that data had been available since December 2015 on the time taken to answer telephone calls in the Contact Centre and he questioned if the Performance Indicator should be amended as it concentrated on the number of calls resolved by the operators. It was noted that the difference in call volume during the week was the major issue and the Contact Centre was staffed accordingly but there was no plan to increase the staffing before Transformation had been introduced.

The Interim Chief Executive clarified that the Transformation project would not affect the telephony system but would investigate why the public were phoning and divert minor reporting issues to the website or other systems.

During discussion, it was noted that:-

- the telephone data available would be circulated to Members.
- SSDC consider allowing telephone messages to be taken at peak periods so that phone operators could call the customer back at a quieter time.
- PI 030 related to local groups assisted by the Streetscene service.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the performance information provided.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the 2015/16 performance information at Appendices A, B and C.

Reason: To note the annual summaries of the Council Plan 2012 - 2015 Actions, the Corporate Performance Indicators (PIs) for 2015-16 and the complaints made during 2015-16.

14. Revised Homefinder Somerset Policy (Agenda Item 8)

The Housing and Welfare Manager provided Members with a short power point presentation of the public responses to the consultation which had taken place and the proposed changes to the Homefinder Somerset Policy. She thanked the Scrutiny Task and Finish group who had assisted with simplifying the consultation which had led to an increased response from the public. She said the majority of proposed changes were small wording issues, however, 131 applicants who were currently in Gold band for under-occupancy would be re-banded into Bronze and 73 applicants in Silver band with children in flats above ground level could potentially be re-banded into Bronze. All applicants would have the right to appeal if their banding changed.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee confirmed that they were happy to assist with a Plain English version of the policy.

In response to questions from Members, the Housing and Welfare Manager confirmed:

- If a property was not affordable long-term then the tenants may keep their Gold banding and landlords would give these tenants priority for re-homing.
- There was an increasing elderly population in the area and some applied for housing in case of need in later life.
- There were no proposed changes to the re-housing of ex-services personnel.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked the Housing and Welfare Manager and her team for their improved service. Members were content to confirm the revised Homefinder Somerset Policy and agree that it be implemented.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:

1. approved the revised Homefinder Somerset Policy;
2. delegated authority to the Housing and Welfare Manager to approve the use of the plain English version of the policy.

Reason: To confirm the proposed amendments to the current Homefinder Somerset Policy and seek agreement to implement the revised policy.

15. Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping (Agenda Item 9)

The Principal Environmental Protection Officer advised that from 9th May a new sanction had been introduced by the Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalty) Regulations 2016 to deal with fly tipping offences by fixed penalty notice. The new legislation allowed Councils to set a figure between £150 and £400 and it was suggested that SSDC set their rate at £200, reduced to £150 if paid within 10 days. It was proposed that the fixed penalty notices would be issued for smaller fly tipping incidences, whilst the Council would continue to pursue a prosecution for larger lorry loads of fly tipped waste.

In response to questions from Members, the Principal Environmental Protection Officer confirmed that:-

- SSDC was not obliged to clear fly tipped waste from private land, but, officers could investigate and take enforcement action.
- The legislation did not allow Councils to increase the penalty notice if a fine remained unpaid.
- Outstanding fixed penalty notices would be recovered through prosecution rather than as a civil debt.
- The average cost to SSDC to clear a small amount of fly tipped waste was £115.
- Fly tipping was a criminal offence.
- It would not be possible to increase the fine for a second offence, however, officers would look at the public interest test and may deal with a second offence by prosecution rather than issue a fixed penalty notice.

During discussion, some Members felt that £200 was not a sufficient deterrent and it was proposed that the fixed penalty notice be set at £250, reduced to £150 if paid within 10 days. This proposal was seconded and when put to the vote, was carried (voting: 5 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention).

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed to set the level for fixed penalty notices for offences under Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (unlawful disposal of waste) at £250 with a reduction to £150 if paid within 10 days of the date of issue.

Reason: To agree an appropriate level at which to set the fine for new fixed penalty notices available for persons committing an offence of the unlawful disposal of waste (fly tipping).

(Voting: 5 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention)

16. Local Strategic Partnership South Somerset Together (SST) Annual Review (Agenda Item 10)

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that the existing partnership model had been revised and simplified to allow partners to work quickly on big issues. If an issue was important then each organisation would put funding towards resolving it. The partnership would be chaired on a rotation basis in future.

The Interim Chief Executive said the principle was now of an equal partnership and if partners valued a project then they would contribute towards it. Some funding had been retained to continue the Assembly meetings and provide ad-hoc admin support to them.

During a brief discussion, Members were supportive of the new simplified governance arrangements and requested that a report be presented in six months time to assess progress. It was also noted that it would be useful to update Members on the Yeovil One Group, the Health and Well-Being Board and the Key for Life project.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the achievements of the South Somerset Together Partnership and their new, simplified governance arrangements.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:

1. noted the achievements of the South Somerset Together Partnership in 2015/16 and the new, simplified arrangements;
2. noted that the Partnership agreement terminated March 2016 and new simplified governance arrangements are being put in place from June 2016

Reason: To note the progress made by the Local Strategic Partnership on strategic priorities during 2015/16 and to note the new simplified arrangements for the partnership that start from 1 June 2016.

17. Corporate Grants report 2015 - 2016 (Agenda Item 11)

The Third Sector and Partnership Co-ordinator advised that the grants made by the Area Committees were higher than previous years due to several large projects applying for funding. Some of the projects had been delivered under budget and so did not claim the full amount awarded by SSDC.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Director (Communities) confirmed that:-

- Small grants of pump priming funding was often all that play activities and youth projects needed to start.
- A report had been presented to Scrutiny Committee the previous year on the standard assessment criteria used by the Area Committees.

During discussion Members highlighted the importance of encouraging organisations to be self-sufficient and providing a sinking fund to replace equipment. It was also mentioned that SSDC should publicise the benefit to the community when external funding was attracted to a project in addition to Parish and SSDC funding.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the report detailing the overall spend on voluntary sector grants during 2015/16.

Reason: To note the overall spend on voluntary sector grants in 2015/16.

18. Increase in Councillors on Brympton Parish Council - Community Governance Review (CGR) (Agenda Item 12)

(Councillor Peter Seib declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, as a member of Brympton Parish Council. He left the room during the discussion).

The Democratic Services Manager briefly outlined the discussions which had taken place with Brympton Parish Council following receipt of their request to increase the number of Parish Councillors by one.

There was no debate and Members were content to note that the report would be presented to Full Council for confirmation.

RESOLVED: That District Executive recommend that Council:

1. note the receipt of the request and its validity;
2. agree to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Brympton;
3. agree the Terms of Reference of the review as detailed in Appendix A, including the timetable and arrangements for public consultation;
4. agree that the review will be carried out by the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with Ward Members, Assistant Director (Communities) and the Area South Committee;
5. note that further reports will be brought to Council in order that decisions may be made in respect of draft proposals and final recommendations of the Review.

Reason: To note the receipt of a request (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) from Brympton Parish Council to increase the size of the Parish Council from 11 to 12 Councillors.

19. Monthly News Snapshot (Agenda Item 13)

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.

20. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 14)

There were no amendments to the Executive Forward Plan.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A;
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

21. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on **Thursday, 7th July 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