

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 7 July 2016.**

(9.30 am - 11.50 am)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Sylvia Seal
Carol Goodall	Angie Singleton
Henry Hobhouse	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	

Also Present:

Jason Baker	Sue Steele
Mike Beech	David Norris
Val Keitch	Gina Seaton
Tony Lock	Colin Winder
Mike Lewis	William Wallace

Officers

Rina Singh	Interim Chief Executive
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Angela Watson	Legal Services Manager
Paul Wheatley	Principal Policy Planner
Alasdair Bell	Environmental Health Manager
David Crisfield	Third Sector & Partnerships Co-ordinator
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

22. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the Special District Executive meeting held on 26th May 2016, and, the District Executive meeting held on 2nd June 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

23. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Gubbins and Peter Seib.

24. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made.

25. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

It was agreed that members of the public would speak at the time the agenda item they were present for was discussed.

26. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

27. Verbal Update on Recruitment of Chief Executive Officer (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman advised that 24 applications had been received for the position of Chief Executive. These had been longlisted to 13 candidates who would be interviewed by himself, an independent Chief Executive and the appointed recruitment agency and a shortlist would be drawn up. That shortlist of candidates would be interviewed by the Appointments Panel and it was expected to confirm their proposed candidate at Council on 18th August.

28. Five-Year Housing Land Supply Update (July 2016) (Agenda Item 7)

Mr B Hartley of East Coker Parish Council said it was almost 1 year since SSDC had failed to demonstrate a 5 year land supply and it was now 1,000 homes short of the required target. He said the Council needed to deliver more than 800 houses per year to meet their target and he urged the Executive to recommend an immediate review of the Local Plan housing figures.

Mr N Whitsun-Jones, Chairman for the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) expressed his surprise that SSDC were content to accept the lack of a 5 year housing land supply and the consequent inability to resist development. He said there should be an early review of the Local Plan on the basis of the latest information available.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) said the Council was demonstrating a 4 year and 2 month land supply according to the calculation formula and this included a 20% buffer. However a poor planning proposal could still be rejected and the Council continued to successfully appeal poorly designed proposed new developments. She said the planning team were working with developers to see if they could lift any barriers to enable development.

The Principal Policy Planner explained the process for calculating the 5 year housing land supply. He regretted that only 606 dwelling had been completed during the last year, however, he said that the challenge was as much about ensuring developers deliver on the permissions they had been granted and that they would not automatically flood the market with housing otherwise they may distort the market which would affect sales values. As the Council could demonstrate a 4 year and 2 month land supply, then some weight could be afforded to the Council's policies. An early review of the Local Plan was progressing but it must be evidence based.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, the Principal Policy Planner advised that:-

- Although there may be some transitional difficulties, it was not expected that the introduction of CIL would slow developments coming forward.
- SSDC were working with large developers in Yeovil, Crewkerne and Chard to see if SSDC could use its resources to unlock development.
- Although a low wage economy was factored into housing delivery, an individual's ability to obtain finance to purchase properties was only just beginning to emerge as best practice.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked the Principal Policy Planner and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) for attending their meeting and answering their questions.

In response to a question why some of the housing supply sites listed in Appendix 1 to the report were included as they were not currently identified housing sites, the Principal Policy Planner explained that they were there for completeness but were not given any status as they did not benefit from planning permission.

During discussion, several Members regretted the lack of the 5 year land supply which affected how they could determine future development and they called for an early review of the Local Plan housing figure and to lobby the Government regarding their National Planning Policy Framework and to change the formula for the 5 year housing land supply. The Chairman confirmed that the District Councils Network (DCN) were lobbying the Government on this issue and he offered to circulate the minutes of their meetings to Members.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive :-

1. endorsed the Five-year Housing Land Supply update paper, and resolved that the conclusions and implications be effective as of 7th July 2016 (See Appendix A).
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 Five-year Housing Land Supply update paper to be published.

Reason: To update Members on the Council's five-year housing land supply position for the period 2016/2017 to 2020/2021.

(voting: 5 in favour, 2 against, 0 abstentions)

29. Approval of the Somerset District Authorities Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy 2015-2020 and the Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy 2015-2020 (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health advised that adopting the two policies would ensure a clear and common approach to enforcement throughout Somerset.

The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that the Regulation Code expected local authorities to publish a clear set of service standards on how they would approach enforcement in an even handed and transparent manner.

In response to a question, the Environmental Health Manager said there were many external agencies providing enforcement advice so there was limited scope to offer SSDC services to other Local Authorities, however, the Transformation programme may take them forward.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm both Enforcement Policies and agreed to adopt them as Council Policy.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to adopt as Council Policy and approve as fit for purpose:-

1. South Somerset District Council's Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy 2016-2020 in Appendix 1.
2. The Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy 2016-2020 in Appendix 2.

Reason: To adopt as fit for purpose South Somerset District Council's Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy 2016-2020 in Appendix 1 and the Environmental Protection Enforcement Policy 2016-2020 in Appendix 2 to the Agenda report.

30. 2015/16 Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 9)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that although the revenue budget underspend was less than the previous year, there had been savings due to vacant staff posts and recovery of housing benefit overpayments. Following the recruitment of 4 additional staff in the Revenues and Benefits service, the collection of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates had increased.

It was noted that the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) had attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting and had confirmed their questions relating to the shortfall in income streams and confirmed that a report would be presented regarding advertising on the web and the SSDC Canteen for a Member decision.

During discussion, it was confirmed that none of the vacant posts held were professional officer posts and that administrative posts were pending the Transformation Programme which was looking at cross-service support.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. noted the outturn position of £16,979,214 (an under spend of £802,716) and explanation of variances from budget holders for the 2015/16 financial year as shown in paragraphs 5-6;
- b. approved the carry forwards listed and recommended for approval by Management Board in Appendix B into the 2016/17 budgets;
- c. approved all overspends are funded from general balances;
- d. noted the use of the specific reserves in paragraph 18;
- e. noted the use of general fund balances in paragraph 19 and approved the transfer of £1,300,000 to the Transformation Reserve & £1,292,000 to the NNDR Volatility Reserve;
- f. noted the transfers to and from balances outlined in paragraph 22;
- g. noted the position of the Area Committee balances in paragraph 23;
- h. noted the virements in Appendix G;
- i. noted the stock write offs detailed in paragraph 26.

Reason: To inform Members of the actual spend against budgets for the 2015/16 financial year.

31. 2015/16 Capital Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Chairman advised that an officer from the Yarlinton Housing Group would be attending District Executive on 1st September to discuss their proposal that Right to Buy receipts were retained by them for future investment in new housing. Currently, the receipts were returned to SSDC and part of them were reinvested in affordable housing.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that the budget underspend was due to funding allocated to the purchase of new waste vehicles had not yet been drawn upon.

Members were content to confirm that the projects which had a delayed start in excess of one year remain in the capital programme, and, were content to agree the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. noted the net spend of £2.084 million on capital for the 2015/16 year and approved the financing of the capital programme (paragraph 7 and 19);
- 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 2016/17 and future years as detailed in paragraph 10;
- d. agreed that the projects which had a delayed start in excess of one year totalling £35,000 remain in the capital programme (paragraph 11);
- e. approved the virement of £5,000 outlined in paragraph 13;
- f. noted the post completion reports on the completed schemes as detailed in Appendix B;
- g. noted the balance of S106 deposits by developers held in a reserve as outlined in paragraph 21;

Reason: To inform Members of the outturn of the capital programme of the Council for 2015/16.

32. Key4Life - At Risk Preventative Programme in Somerset (Agenda Item 11)

This report was deferred for further information on the project to be made available to Councillors.

33. Annual Review of SSDC Partnerships (Agenda Item 12)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture confirmed that SSDC worked with a range of partnerships who added value to SSDC services and who were checked for relevance each year.

The Third Sector and Partnership Co-ordinator confirmed the review was now fully complete and it was proposed to retain the Stop Line Way as this was to be reinvigorated by the Area West Committee.

During discussion, it was clarified that the Somerset Intelligence Partnership was a data resource linked to the Census and not a partnership and would be reviewed as such during 2016/17. However, Members expressed concern at the possible removal of the Strategic Partnership Against Hate Crime in view of the recent terrorist attacks. It was

clarified that this organisation came under the Safer Communities Partnership which SSDC were part of along with 23 other agencies, including the Police.

The Chairman also advised that he would be rearranging some of the Portfolio Holder responsibilities and he would confirm them to all Members shortly.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the annual review of SSDC partnerships.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the annual review process and observations for each of the partnerships on the Register.

Reason: To provide District Executive with the annual review of SSDC partnerships.

34. **Community Right to Bid Quarterly Update Report (Agenda Item 13)**

The Third Sector and Partnership Co-ordinator introduced the report and confirmed that the Ward Members and Area Chairmen would continue to be part of the consultation process. He also confirmed that a further 6 nominations had been received from Martock Parish Council which were currently being processed.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee expressed their concern that applicants did not fully understand the impact and implications of registering an asset on the list and the Chairman noted that not one registration had resulted in a successful bid. During discussion it was noted that Stoke Methodist Church had raised the necessary funding and so this may become the first successful bid.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the report.

Reason: To inform members of the current status of the register of Assets of Community Value in South Somerset using the Community Right to Bid, for quarter one of 2016/17.

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

The following additions and amendments to the Forward Plan and Consultation database were noted:

- Emergency Decision taken by CEO on Westland Leisure Complex – Aug 16
- Presentation from Yarlinton Housing Group on Right to Buy receipts – Sept 16
- Energy Company Obligation (ECO): Help to Heat Consultation – closing date 17 August 2016
- Self Sufficient Government – 100% Business Rate Retention – closing date 26 September 2016

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Emergency Decision taken by CEO on Westland Leisure Complex – Aug 16
 - Presentation from Yarlinton Housing Group on Right to Buy receipts – Sept 16

2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B, with the following additional Consultation:
 - Energy Company Obligation (ECO): Help to Heat Consultation

 - Self Sufficient Government – 100% Business Rate Retention – closing date 26 September 2016

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

36. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 4th August 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