

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 23 February 2017** in the Council Chamber.

(7.30 pm - 9.10 pm)

Present:

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

Clare Aparicio Paul	Kaysar Hussain	David Recardo
Jason Baker	Val Keitch	Dean Ruddle
Cathy Bakewell	Andy Kendall	Sylvia Seal
Mike Beech	Mike Lewis	Gina Seaton
Neil Bloomfield	Sarah Lindsay	Peter Seib
Amanda Broom	Mike Lock	Garry Shortland
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Angie Singleton
John Clark	Paul Maxwell	Alan Smith
Nick Colbert	Sam McAllister	Sue Steele
Adam Dance	Graham Middleton	Rob Stickland
Sarah Dyke	David Norris	Andrew Turpin
John Field	Sue Osborne	Martin Wale
Nigel Gage	Tiffany Osborne	Nick Weeks
Carol Goodall	Stephen Page	Colin Winder
Anna Groskop	Ric Pallister	Derek Yeomans
Peter Gubbins	Crispin Raikes	
Henry Hobhouse	Wes Read	

Officers

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Ian Clarke	Director (Support Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Jo Boucher	Democratic Services Officer
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

98. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Gye Dibben, Tim Inglefield, Jenny Kenton, Graham Oakes, Jo Roundell Greene, Gerard Tucker and William Wallace.

99. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th January 2017, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

100. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillors Peter Seib and Sarah Lindsay declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 15, Final Recommendation of the Community Governance Review of Brympton Parish Council, as they are both members of Brympton Parish Council.

101. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

Mr Oakley addressed the committee and voiced his concerns regarding planning application 16/05463/FUL - Land Rear of 25 Hayes End, South Petherton. He raised an objection regarding the proposed addition of a further 2 properties now totalling an overall number of six dwellings and the impact this would have on traffic congestion and highway safety on the neighbouring road network. He asked for support from members regarding this issue.

102. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman welcomed students from Yeovil College who were in attendance to film the beginning of the meeting for an SSDC Staff induction video which they will be producing on behalf of SSDC.

The Chairman informed members of the Highways England presentation for all members on Tuesday 28th February 2017 at 6.00pm about dualling of the A303 between Sparkford and Ilchester, followed by the Police Chief Constable presentation at 7.30pm.

He also confirmed to members that there was a change to the date of the next meeting as set out in the agenda and that the next meeting of the Full Council would now take place on Thursday 16th March 2017.

103. Chairman's Engagements (Agenda Item 6)

The list of Chairman's Engagements was noted.

104. Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services presented the report and commended officers on their support and help in reaching a sensible and balanced budget in what was a very difficult time for Local Government.

He advised that the Local Government settlement had finally been confirmed and within that SSDC had won an appeal for the New Homes Bonus settlement to what was originally offered. He then proceeded to highlight several financial updates to the report although these did not change the recommendations as set out in the agenda report.

He explained to members the conclusion of how the budget had been balanced through the use of once-off funds and deferment of pension liabilities and though not ideal gave a good indication of the severity of the situation the Council was currently in.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services), Leader of Council and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services advised that:

- The 2016/17 budget had detailed the introduction of an automatic number plate recognition system in SSDC in car parks but this had not proceeded and so it had not been possible to make the saving.
- Referred to last year's budget for 2016/17 which gave detailed information regarding the issues on car parking and did not believe a fundamental review of the Car Parking Strategy was to be undertaken.
- Under the Budget Revenue Summary that 'Arts' referred mainly to the Octagon Theatre and would be corrected for future budget monitoring.
- The Council only looked to balance the budget for the next financial year and those years after that were for indication purposes only.
- Due to the current and future financial climate it was highly likely that Council Tax would need to be raised in the future.

The Leader of the Council also noted members appreciation of the Licensing Service and congratulated them for the excellent work undertaken.

At the conclusion of the debate, the majority of Members were content to confirm the proposed Revenue Budget for 2017/18, the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme as presented.

RESOLVED: That Council:

- (a) approved the overall Revenue Budget for 2017/18 of **£17,379,200** and the Revenue Account Summary as shown at Appendix A and note future year projections outlined in paragraph 33;
- (b) approved the detailed budgets for the District Executive and four Area Committees as shown at Appendix B;
- (c) approved the increase of £5.00 per annum in the Council Tax for 2017/18 for South Somerset District Council, which will result in a Band D charge of £157.48;
- (d) approved the transfer of £109,729 to the Somerset Rivers Authority;
- (e) approved the additional expenditure for budget pressure bids and removal of 16/17 once offs as shown in Appendix C;
- (f) approved the savings proposals in Appendix D in conjunction with the equalities checks;
- (g) noted the current position and future estimation of reserves and balances as shown in paragraphs 53-57;
- (h) noted the deferral of new capital schemes pending the finalisation of the Council Plan 2017/18 Annual Plan;

- (i) noted the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement and Capital Prudential Indicators as attached at Appendix E.

Reason: To seek approval of the 2017/18 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (Revenue Budgets for 2017/18 to 2021/22).

(Voting: 39 for, 0 against, 12 abstentions)

105. Council Tax Setting 2017/18 (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services presented the report as detailed in the agenda and proposed the recommendations which were subsequently seconded.

There was no debate and the majority of Members confirmed the Council Tax setting for 2016/17.

RESOLVED: That Full Council approved the following:

- (a) the formal council tax resolutions referred to in paragraphs 4 to 13
- (b) and the individual tax setting as follows:
 - (i) that the **Somerset County Council; Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset (PCC for Avon and Somerset); and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority** has stated the amounts shown in paragraphs 7 to 10 respectively of this report in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), for each of the categories of dwelling;
 - (ii) that the **total amount** of council tax for each band of property in the South Somerset area for 2017/18 be as given in the table below:

A -	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
858.70	1,030.43	1,202.17	1,373.91	1,545.65	1,889.13	2,232.60	2,576.09	3,091.30

NB: The above figures exclude all **town/parish precepts** and assume that the figures provided by Somerset County Council & Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue are approved at their full Council meetings on 15th February & 17th February 2017 respectively. If any changes are required they will be reported to the meeting. PCC for Avon and Somerset approved their figures on 8th February 2017.

- (iii) that, having calculated the totals of each precepting authority's amounts (including town and parish precepts), the Council (in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Act 1992) (as amended) hereby sets the amounts shown at **TOTAL** in the table shown at Appendix A as the council taxes for the financial year 2017/18 for each category of dwelling.

(c) the total Band D Council Tax will be as follows:

	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	Increase %
South Somerset District Council	152.48	157.48	3.28
Somerset County Council	1,060.84	1,082.36	3.99
Somerset County Council (Adult Social Care)	20.80	42.43	
PCC for Avon and Somerset	178.26	181.81	1.99
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority	79.98	81.57	1.99
	1,492.36	1,545.65	3.57
Town and Parish Council (average)	77.60	84.73	9.19
	1,569.96	1,630.38	3.85

Reason: To seek approval of the final council tax resolutions for 2017/18.

(Voting: 33 for, 0 against, 18 abstentions)

106. Heart of the South West Devolution Update (Agenda Item 9)

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and provided an overview of the latest situation, noting that there were now nationally only a couple of rural local authorities proceeding along the original devolution route.

He explained that the South West authorities were now looking for an alternative way forward, and that was to form a Joint Committee. The information detailed in pages 88 and 89 of the Agenda report were highlighted to members and that an aim was to gain greater democratic control of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). He noted there was currently only one representative for the whole of Somerset and there was currently no democratic accountability of the LEP.

It was noted that SSDC were a minor player on the Growth Board. He explained that joint working in a formal way, albeit with limited powers, was a way forward and would show the government we could work together.

During a short discussion, some members expressed their reservations and requested that a report should come back for consideration after the green paper has been published. The Leader responded to comments made and noted there was a need to move forward promptly with the proposed Joint Committee as without it there would be no access to funding. He noted that previously members had made clear there was a need to protect the high-tech sector in South Somerset. He commented that the in-principle way forward should go ahead, and wait for the green paper to be published and then consider a further update report around July 2017.

At the conclusion of debate, it was proposed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the agenda report but to agree to note rather than endorse them.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed to

1. note the update about the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Combined Authority / devolution deal proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, would have responsibility for developing future 'deal' and combined authority proposals for

recommendation to the constituent authorities);

2. approve the proposals for the HotSW Productivity Plan preparation and consultation proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, would have responsibility for approving and overseeing the implementation of the Productivity Plan);
3. And agreed:
 - (a) 'In principle' to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee with a Commencement Date of Friday 1st September 2017 in accordance with the summary proposals set out in the report;
 - (b) That the 'in principle' decision at (a) above is subject to further recommendation and report to the constituent authorities after the County Council elections in May 2017 and confirmatory decisions to: approve the establishment of the Joint Committee; a constitutional 'Arrangements' document; an 'Inter-Authority Agreement' setting out the support arrangements; appoint representatives to the Join Committee; and appoint an Administering Authority.

Reason: The urgent and essential need to improve productivity across the HotSW area is the driver for the recommendations in this report.

(Voting: 47 in favour, 2 against, 2 abstentions)

107. Superfast Broadband Extension Programme - Update Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Leader of the Council presented the report and informed members that although the Council was keen to support the delivery of this programme they were still awaiting further detail from Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) regarding the geographic coverage and extent of the new programme. He believed that until sufficient information was forthcoming regarding the areas, especially for businesses and rural communities, no further proposals could be made at this stage and that further specialist advice was required.

He referred to the recommendations as set out in the agenda report and promised that reports would be brought back to Full Council no less than quarterly, with the understanding that as soon as sufficient information was available it would be brought to Full Council to determine SSDC's future financial commitment to the programme.

During discussion comments were made regarding confusion over the information provided from the broadband provider 'Gigaclear'. They appreciated the cautious approach at this stage and agreed that further information and advice was necessary before any financial commitment was agreed.

Following a short debate, it was proposed and subsequently seconded to agree most of the recommendations but with removal of recommendation 'd' as set out in the agenda report. On being put to the vote this was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed to:

- a) Note the updated information in the report regarding the delivery of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast (Broadband) Extension Programme.
- b) Await further detail of the geographic coverage and extent of the new programme (including the proposed CDS voucher scheme). This detail is expected from CDS by March/ April 2017 and upon receipt of this information, determine whether SSDC's potential financial contribution can be incorporated into a voucher scheme for South Somerset Residents and Businesses.
- c) Authorise officers to further explore options for a superfast broadband voucher scheme should the outcome of recommendation 2 (the CDS Voucher scheme) be negative.
- d) Request officers to report back to Full Council as soon as sufficient information was available for members to take a decision on committing funding to a superfast broadband voucher scheme.

Reason: To provide an update on the Superfast Broadband Extension Programme.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

108. Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste Vehicles (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services presented the report and proposed the recommendations which were subsequently seconded.

There being no debate Members unanimously agreed to approve the loan of £3.5 million to Somerset Waste Partnership.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed:

1. to approve the loan of £3.5 million to Somerset Waste Partnership towards the purchase of new recycling vehicles;
2. to note that this capital expenditure would be added to the Capital Programme, and that the principal payments received would be capital receipts;
3. to note the additional interest in the region of £29,255 per annum would be added to the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2018/19.

Reason: To seek approval for South Somerset District Council to loan the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) £3.5 million towards the purchase of new refuse vehicles.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

109. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2017/18 (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Derek Yeomans, as Chairman of the Audit Committee presented the report and stated that they had scrutinised the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy and he invited any questions upon it.

In response to questions, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised members of the Council's current market investment position both within the UK and abroad, the risks associated with the investments and the need to diversify.

The Chief Executive also explained the future prospect to invest locally in schemes that would generate a return, that were secure and would help the local economy. He appreciated this would take time and that short term measures were being looked at to help the Council's current revenue position.

There being no further debate Members unanimously confirmed the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

Reason: To approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18, as attached at appendix 1 to the agenda report.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

110. Appointment of an External Auditor (Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Derek Yeomans, as Chairman of the Audit Committee proposed the recommendations which were subsequently seconded.

There being no debate Members unanimously agreed the route for the appointment of an External Auditor.

RESOLVED: That Council approved that SSDC opt in to the Public Sector Audit appointments (PSAA) to appoint an external auditor by December 2017.

Reason: To agree the route for appointing an External Auditor from April 2018.

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

111. Statutory Pay Policy Statement for Chief Officers 2017 - 18 (Agenda Item 14)

The Leader of the Council presented the report and stated that all Councils were obliged to publicise their chief officer's salaries and any other benefits received each year. He noted that the statement also confirmed that SSDC did not employ any staff on the minimum wage.

In response to a question, the Leader of Council confirmed that the current multiplier for redundancy was not part of this report. There being no further debate Members were

pleased to approve the proposed Statutory Pay Policy Statement for Chief Officers for the year 2017-18 for publication.

RESOLVED: That Council approved the proposed Statutory Pay Policy Statement for the year 2017-18 for publication.

Reason: To agree the Pay Policy Statement for Chief Officers as required under Section 38 (1) of Localism Act 2011. This requires local authorities to prepare, approve and publish an annual statutory pay policy statement by 31st March for each financial year.

(Voting: 47 for, 0 against, 1 abstention)

112. Final Recommendation of the Community Governance Review of Brympton Parish Council (Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Carol Goodall presented the report and proposed the recommendations as set out in the agenda which were subsequently seconded.

There being no debate Members unanimously agreed to the final recommendation of the Community Governance Review of Brympton Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That Council agreed:

1. to note the results of the consultation and agree to publish them
2. that the final recommendation be: "To accept the vote from the people of Brympton to agree to increase the number of Parish Councillors to twelve"
3. to draw up a Reorganisation Order to give effect to this recommendation.

Reason: To confirm the the outcome of the final public consultation (Community Governance Review) which has taken place in the parish of Brympton on the proposal to increase the number of Parish Councillors from eleven to twelve (under the provisions of Part 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

(Voting: Unanimous in favour)

113. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 16)

The report of Executive Decisions was noted.

114. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Derek Yeomans, Chairman of the Audit Committee, introduced the report and invited any questions upon it.

There being no debate members were content to note the report of the Audit Committee.

115. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Sue Steele, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the report. She noted the call in request regarding the decision taken by the Somerset Waste Board on 16 December 2016 and confirmed Scrutiny's action was to pass the questions and concerns raised from the public on to Somerset County Council Scrutiny.

There being no debate members were content to note the report of the Scrutiny Committee.

116. Motions (Agenda Item 19)

There were no Motions submitted by Members.

117. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 20)

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

118. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 21)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of Full Council would take place on Thursday 16th March 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 7.30 p.m.

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Chairman

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Date