

## South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 20 April 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	Henry Hobhouse	Jo Roundell Greene
Jason Baker	Kaysar Hussain	Dean Ruddle
Cathy Bakewell	Val Keitch	Sylvia Seal
Marcus Barrett	Andy Kendall	Gina Seaton
Mike Beech	Jenny Kenton	Peter Seib
Neil Bloomfield	Mike Lewis	Angie Singleton
Amanda Broom	Mike Lock	Alan Smith
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Sue Steele
John Clark	Graham Middleton	Rob Stickland
Adam Dance	David Norris	Gerard Tucker
Sarah Dyke	Graham Oakes	Andrew Turpin
John Field	Sue Osborne	Martin Wale
Nigel Gage	Stephen Page	William Wallace
Carol Goodall	Ric Pallister	Nick Weeks
Anna Groskop	Crispin Raikes	Colin Winder
Peter Gubbins	David Recardo	Derek Yeomans

**Officers:**

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Ian Clarke	Director (Support Services)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Catherine Hood	Finance Manager
Steve Brewer	Community Safety & Projects Co-ordinator
David Chubb	Technology implementation Manager
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Colbert, Sarah Lindsay, Paul Maxwell, Sam McAllister, Tiffany Osborne, Wes Read, Garry Shortland and Linda Vijeh.

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### 136. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 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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### **137. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest made.

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

Ms V Poole spoke on behalf of St Margaret's Hospice in Yeovil. She said that one of their commercial ovens had unexpectedly broken beyond repair, and, as this was unforeseen, there was no budget to replace it in 2017/18. She said that she would be contacting each of the Council's Area Committees to request assistance in replacing it.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture commended the Hospice for the care they provided to the community and said the contact details for the Area Committees would be provided.

Mr B Budzynski said that during the recent presentation of Jesus Christ Superstar at the Octagon Theatre, the tickets had been printed with both the Westands / Octagon entertainment venues which had caused some confusion to the public attending as to which venue the performance was being held.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture said this had been brought to their attention and they were looking at the future presentation of tickets for both venues.

Ms V Cornelius asked if the Council would consider installing a gate at the entrance to Yeovil Recreation Ground's Chilton Grove car park. Local residents had to deal with anti-social behaviour by people using the car park late at night and in previous years it had been occupied by travellers which had required both security staff and a clear up of the car park after they had left at tax-payers expense. She said that no-one needed to be in the car park after 10.30pm and asked the Council to consider that it may be cost effective to install a gate or barrier.

The Portfolio Holder for Property confirmed that a written answer would be provided.

The Leader of Council advised that he had raised the issue of having a temporary transit site for travellers in the district at a Somerset CEO and Leaders meeting recently. If a temporary site could be identified then the Police could use their powers to move any travellers in the area to the site.

Mr R Skarbek, the CEO of Diversity Voice, said they were a small local charity providing support to ethnic minorities, working mainly with children and young people to ensure they were safe and secure. He said that following a number of reports of racial abuse from Romanian taxi drivers in Yeovil they had arranged a community tension meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> April at the Yeovil Day Centre to discuss this and other issues with a number of interested organisations. He invited Members to attend the meeting to raise awareness and encourage support for victim of hate crime. He also asked that SSDC publicly state that it would stand up to race crime and work closely with Diversity Voice.

The Leader of Council responded that SSDC took their lead on such issues from SARI and the Police, but, SSDC would always deal positively with hate and race crime. Any complaints from taxi drivers would be dealt with by the SSDC Licensing service. He

hoped that Members would be available to attend the community tension meeting the following week and he said the council would look at working closer with his organisation in the future.

The Chairman of Council confirmed that SSDC had passed a Motion in July 2016 confirming its intolerance of race and hate crime. He said that he would forward a copy of it to Mr Skarbek.

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

There were no announcements by the Chairman.

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

The list of Chairman's Engagements were noted.

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### **141. SSDC Council Action Plan 2017-18 (Agenda Item 7)**

The Leader of Council introduced the report to Members and drew their attention to the list of Priority Projects for 2017/18, which, he said, following discussion at Scrutiny Committee and District Executive, it had been proposed to add the words 'and income generation' to Priority 1 on the second page of the plan. It had also been noted that Priorities 5 and 6 were broadly similar and it was suggested that Priority 6 be deleted. The asterisk on page 3 of the plan were a typo and would be removed.

Councillor Nick Weeks proposed that the word 'local' be added to Priority 5 to cover the local housing element which would be removed by deleting Priority 6. He also asked for assurance that the Market Towns Investment Group would be funded and refreshed in the coming years.

During a short discussion, it was confirmed that the Market Towns Investment Group would continue and any capital funding would be subject to the usual budgetary process.

The proposal to amend the list of priorities by adding 'and income generation' to Priority 1 and 'local' to Priority 5 was proposed and seconded and was unanimously agreed. These amendments to the original proposals were then unanimously agreed by all Members.

**RESOLVED:** That Full Council adopted the Annual Action Plan 2017-18, as amended.

**Reason:** To endorse the SSDC Annual Action Plan 2017/18.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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### **142. SSDC Transformation Programme (Agenda Item 8)**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development reminded Members of the need to produce £4.7m in savings over the next 4 years. She drew their attention to

a graph which showed a projection of the headline and revised business cases costs profiles which demonstrated a faster return under the revised business case to realise the required £4.7m savings. She outlined the other proposals to revise the senior leadership structure, to appoint CIVICA as the technology provider and the revised redundancy reserve, which she said was a target and not a budget. The overall proposals represented a 3 year payback period.

In response to questions from Members, the Leader of Council and the Chief Executive confirmed:-

- The Government's proposed £95,000 redundancy cap for senior officers had not been finally implemented by them.
- The strategic capacity within the senior leadership team would be provided at a lower cost than previously proposed. A number of new roles would be needed and some would be permanent and some temporary.
- The proposed new Director would be a permanent post.
- The proposed 33% was the rate of return on investment.
- There was a very detailed spreadsheet which evidenced the savings and targets.
- Since the high level business case had been agreed the previous year, the assumptions had been tested and the proposed budget was robust and sufficient to deliver the programme.

During discussion, it was noted that quarterly progress reports would be made to the Scrutiny Committee and there would be a monthly Members Bulletin. Members also thanked the Chief Executive for his Transformation presentation to them the previous week.

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

**RESOLVED:** That Full Council:-

- i. Approved the further revision to the senior leadership structure as set out in section 2 of the report;
- ii. Noted the revised cost of the senior leadership structure which would produce a further saving of £30,134 per year on top of the £200,537 saving outlined in the report to Council in October 2016;
- iii. Agreed the revised Business Case for Transformation and noted the headline risks included in the report;
- iv. Agreed the award of a contract to CIVICA UK LTD for a technology platform and services in support of the future model;
- v. Noted the progress to date and the programme for delivering Transformation;
- vi. Agreed the revised Transformation Programme governance arrangements as set out in section 3 and Appendix A of the report;
- vii. Approved that additional net savings of £539,800 be added to the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2018/19 and 2019/20;

- viii. Allocated a further £756,585 from capital receipts reserved within the capital programme for transformation;
- ix. Approved the use of Revenue Support Reserve for 2020/21 of £1,508,000 to fund revenue once-off costs (£564,570) and contribute to the Redundancy Reserve (£943,430);
- x. Approved the use of £231,270 of General Fund Balances to support the Redundancy Reserve;
- xi. Noted that the Redundancy Reserve had a target of a further £1,100,000 to find through underspends and the MTFP;
- xii. Noted that a further £400,000 in capital receipts that could be utilised for revenue spend remain to be found to fund the Transformation Programme.

**Reason:** To report on progress with the Transformation Programme and approve the revised business case for the programme, the award of the technology partner contract and a revised senior structure.

*(Voting: 47 in favour, 0 against, 3 abstentions)*

#### **143. Proposal to Establish a Commercial Income Generation Fund (Agenda Item 9)**

The Portfolio Holder for Income Generation outlined the Council's proposal to generate an income of £2m by 2020 to preserve services to the public. He noted the ringfenced sum of £15m had been split between renewable projects and property investment and development, however, following discussion at Scrutiny Committee and District Executive it was now proposed as one fund.

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation said there was currently a property review under way which would present a report in June/July and from that, proposals would be presented to District Executive. Any future business cases would be presented to the Executive with a focus on income generation.

In response to questions from Members, the Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation and Leader of Council confirmed:-

- It was hoped to refine the decision making process to a small panel to take schemes forward swiftly as the current Executive report process could hamper progress.
- The ringfenced £15m would be for income generating schemes, but, the existing regeneration schemes within the district would continue.
- The proposed 7% return on investment was ambitious but achievable if managed over a spread of investments.

The Portfolio Holder invited all Members to attend the Income Generation Board meetings to receive updates on the progress of the various schemes being proposed.

He said progress would also be reported through Audit \Committee and the finance reports to the District Executive.

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

**RESOLVED:** That Full Council:-

- a. approved the ringfencing of £15,000,000 within the Capital Programme for a Renewables, Property Investment and Development Project Fund;
- b. noted that the findings of The Strategic Commercial Land and Property Project would be reported to District Executive for approval no later than July 2017.

**Reason:** To agree to ringfence a capital sum to purchase property, land, and renewables as part of agreeing the revised capital programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

*(Voting: 48 in favour, 1 against, 1 abstention)*

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#### **144. Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2021/22 (Agenda Item 10)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services reminded Members that they had agreed the Revenue Budget in February and he drew their attention to the new proposed capital schemes listed in Appendix B.

In response to questions from Members, the Leader and Deputy Leader of Council confirmed:-

- The proposed affordable housing scheme in Crewkerne would be delivered in partnership with Stonewater Housing, however, due to some access issues, planning permission had not yet been applied for.
- The Yeovil Innovation Centre was operating at 85% occupancy which was the optimum rate.
- The Annual Report of the Yeovil Innovation Centre would detail its full income and occupancy rates.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members unanimously confirmed the revised Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

**RESOLVED:** That Full Council:-

- a. approved the revised Capital Programme as shown in Appendix A;
- b. approved the new schemes to be included in the Capital Programme as shown in Appendix B;
- c. noted the scoring of new capital schemes outlined in Appendix C;
- d. noted the proposed funding of the Capital Programme as shown in

paragraph 12;

- e. noted the detailed Capital Investment appraisal forms for new schemes, as shown at Appendix D.

**Reason:** To approve the Capital Programme for 2017/18 to 2021/22.

*(Voting: unanimous in favour)*

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#### **145. Section 151 Officer Arrangements (Agenda Item 11)**

The Chief Executive advised that the Section 151 Officer was a statutory function within the council which was currently positioned within the Support Services directorate. However, as this was a senior role, it was still to be determined where it would be positioned in the senior management structure. He said that at the current time it made sense to fill the role on a temporary basis and, as Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils were currently facing the same challenges it was sensible to share the role with them.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services drew Members attention to the second recommendation which he said would provide the necessary cover when the Section 151 Officer was elsewhere.

There was no debate, and when the recommendations were put to the vote, the majority of Members were in favour.

**RESOLVED:** That Full Council:-

1. agreed that Paul Fitzgerald be this Council's designated Section 151 Officer initially for a period of up to 6 months from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2017.
2. noted that the Finance Manager, Catherine Hood, had already been nominated as Deputy Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Finance Officer authorised to act in the absence of the Section 151 Officer and it has been agreed that the shared Section 151 Officer would continue with this arrangement/endorse that nomination.

**Reason:** To confirm the Council's arrangements for a Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance Officer going forward.

*(Voting: 48 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions)*

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#### **146. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 12)**

The report of Executive Decisions was noted.

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#### **147. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 13)**

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

There was no debate and Members were content to note the report of the Audit Committee.

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**148. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 14)**

Councillor Sue Steele, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the report. She thanked the Portfolio Holder and Leader of Council for attending their recent meeting to clarify points in the income generation report. She also confirmed the status of current Scrutiny Task and Finish Group work.

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**149. Motions (Agenda Item 15)**

Councillor Graham Oakes referred to his Motion which Council had supported in January 2017 relating to requesting support for community pharmacies. He said that 4 letters had been written to the Government and local MP's however, only one response had been received from the Chairman of the local Clinical Commissioning Group. He asked if any further responses had been received?

The Leader of Council agreed to investigate the matter.

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**150. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 16)**

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

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**151. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 17)**

Members noted that the Annual meeting of the Full Council would take place on **Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> May 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