

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 6 July 2017**.

(9.30 am - 12.55 pm)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Peter Gubbins	Peter Seib
Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton
Val Keitch	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	Derek Yeomans
Sylvia Seal	

Also Present:

Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock
Mike Lewis	Colin Winder

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Ian Clarke	Director (Support Services)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Steve Joel	Former Director (Health and Well-Being)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

12. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 1st June 2017, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

13. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

14. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made.

15. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public present.

16. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman advised that he and the Chief Executive had attended the LGA Annual Conference earlier that week. He said that he would circulate an email on what he had learnt at the Conference to all Members.

17. Westlands Leisure Complex (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture referred to the comprehensive report before members and advised that the refurbishment works were now 90% complete. She said the project board had monitored progress and had resolved issues as they arose. The project would exceed its original budget due to a number of unforeseen circumstances.

The former Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) advised that the budget overspend was under negotiation with the contractors and it would be between 1 and 10% of the overall budget. The sporting and fitness centres were scheduled to break even at the 9 month point which was ahead of schedule and over 10,000 tickets had been sold for various events held at the complex.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee and Members, the former Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) advised that:-

- The project overspend would not impact upon other projects across the district.
- A number of the issues which contributed to the overspend could have been identified earlier, however, the need to and subsequent cost of replacing the power cable to the site could not have been foreseen.
- Excluding the need to replace the power cable, the 5% contingency would have been appropriate.
- The insurance claim for damage to the roof had been successful.
- Some of the original furniture from the complex had been taken by local village halls and schools.

During discussion Members were very supportive of the completed project but it was noted that lessons could be learned from it for future commercial schemes. It was also noted that the Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation would be the future contact for the complex and the Arts and Entertainment Manager would be in charge of day to day operations.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman, Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader all thanked the former Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) for managing the project to completion and recognised the wider SSDC staff who had provided professional assistance.

Members were content to note the contents of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the progress achieved to date at the Westland Leisure Complex.

Reason: To provide the District Executive with a summary of the progress in delivering the Westlands Leisure Complex Project

18. SSDC Corporate Peer Challenge and Review (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman advised that the review team of Councillors and officers from other authorities had been excellent and the points raised in their report were valid. They had presented their report to Members at a briefing on 27th June.

The Chief Executive drew Members attention to the Action Plan at page 31 and said the peer review team would return in 12 to 18 months time to assess the progress made against their recommendations. The Transformation Board would monitor the progress of the recommendations in the high level action plan.

During discussion, it was noted that one of the recommendations of the peer review was to review fees and charges, including car parking charges and it was agreed that a Scrutiny Task and Finish review group be established to look at this.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the peer review report and confirm the the high level action plan set out in Appendix B, in response to the Peer Review findings.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- i. note the findings of the Peer Review Team set out in their report attached as Appendix A;
- ii. note the recommendations of the Peer Review Team set out in section two of their report attached as Appendix A and summarised in section 3 of the report;
- iii. agree the high level action plan set out in Appendix B, in response to the Peer Review findings;
- iv. request the Transformation Programme Board monitors progress with delivery of the action plan and updates on progress be provided to District Executive through the regular reporting on Transformation;
- v. invite a follow-up visit by the Peer Review Team within the period of the next 12 to 18 months, to help the Council monitor progress with delivery of our plans and ambitions.

Reason: To report the findings of the Peer Review Team and seek Member approval for the high level action plan to address the findings of the review.

19. SSDC Transformation Programme - Progress Report (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development and Transformation introduced the report and advised that the Transformation Board were monitoring the progress of the programme. The Going for Gold events held at the Westlands Complex had been very positive and had been an opportunity for staff to ask questions.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee and Members, the Chief Executive confirmed that:-

- Detail on the savings made through Transformation would be presented in quarterly reports as they were achieved. Expenditure could also be detailed.
- The first savings were expected to be achieved in quarter 4.
- Staff in the Transformation Team were on temporary contracts.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the contents of the report on the Transformation Programme.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the report

Reason: To note the progress of the SSDC Transformation Programme

20. Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda Item 9)

The Corporate Strategic Housing Manager introduced his report and advised that some of the information had been updated as Knightstone Housing had been placed under contract on a development site in Somerton which would be providing 31 affordable houses.

In response to questions from Members, the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager advised that:-

- Shared ownership properties sometimes presented difficulties as the prospective tenant/owner had to have an income sufficient to meet the rent / mortgage payments and the properties could then be difficult to sell on.
- The Rent Plus model allowed tenants to pay rent and would be offered to purchase the property at a discount in the future.
- Only the people who had been tenants of SSDC when the housing stock transferred to Yarlington Homes in 1999 and remained tenants of Yarlington ever since had the preserved right to buy their homes.
- He would seek a meeting with Knightstone Housing and Yeovil Town Council at the earliest opportunity to discuss the proposed housing site at Goldcroft.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman advised that the funding for the purchase of cookers at the Stonewater development in Queensway, Yeovil was to encourage Housing Associations to be more proactive in assisting their tenants with the essential equipment needed in a new home.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. confirm ringfencing of the £175,000 grant returned from Spectrum for deployment to produce new affordable housing in Yeovil [ref section 7];
- b. note the outturn position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2016/17 [ref section 10];
- c. de-allocate £2,300 from Magna Housing Association for the single acquisition in Chard which came in under budget [ref section 11];
- d. de-allocate a further £312,500 from Stonewater for the Learning Disability (LD) scheme at West Hendford, Yeovil [ref section 11];
- e. allocate an additional £11,000 for Stonewater for the supply and fitting of cookers at the Queensway scheme, Yeovil [ref section 11];
- f. confirm an allocation of £92,500 to BCHA for acquisition of five bought not built properties [ref section 11];
- g. note the progress made on Community Led Housing and use of the specific fund allocated by central Government [ref section 13].

Reason: To update the Executive on the final position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2016/17, the current position for 2017/18 and future prospect.

21. 2016/17 Capital Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that the final columns of Appendix A were not correctly added up in the paper copies of the agenda, however, this had been corrected on the website.

The Section 151 Officer advised that the overall performance of the capital budget was close to that expected with some minor underspends and he was content with the outcome.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Section 151 officer confirmed that the funding allocated for bus shelters would be returned to balances.

Members were content to note and approve the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the net spend of £6.187 million on capital schemes for the 2016/17 year and approve the financing of the capital programme (paragraph 7 and 18);
- b. note the progress of individual capital schemes and the lead officers' comments as detailed in Appendix A;
- c. approve the revisions, including profiling amendments to the Capital

- Programme for 2017/18 and future years as detailed in paragraph 10;
- d. approve the virement of £67,000 outlined in paragraph 12;
 - e. approve the addition £1,220,000 to the Capital Programme budget, funded from additional income as set out in para 13;
 - f. note the post completion reports on the completed schemes as detailed in Appendix B;
 - g. note the balance of S106 deposits by developers held in a reserve as outlined in paragraph 23.

Reason: To agree the outturn of the capital programme of the Council for 2016/17

22. 2016/17 Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that for recommendation (c) the underspend figure should be £144,310.

In response to questions from Scrutiny Committee and Members it was noted that:

- The Development Control overspend was due to the use of external lawyers engaged to defend planning appeals, and, the costs awarded to a developer for two appeals allowed.
- SSDC used to have fraud investigation officers, however, they had been transferred to the DWP. There was now a need for some investigatory resource within the authority.
- The Government had refused to share information from the DVLA with Local Authorities, so denying them the use of automatic number plate recognition system to control car parking.

The Chairman said he would write to the Government Minister regarding the information sharing with the DVLA.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the outturn position of £17,391,660 (an under spend of £390,670) and explanation of variances from budget holders for the 2016/17 financial year as shown in paragraphs 4-6;
- b. approve the carry forwards listed and recommended for approval by Senior Leadership Team in Appendix B into the 2017/18 budgets;
- c. approve individual service overspends are funded from general balances and the net underspend of £144,310 is transferred to the Transformation Reserve;

- d. note the use of the specific reserves in paragraph 19;
- e. note the transfers to and from balances outlined in the General Fund table paragraph 20;
- f. note the position of the Area Committee balances in paragraph 23;
- g. approve the virement in paragraph 28 and note the virements in Appendix G;

Reason: To agree the outturn of the revenue budgets of the Council for 2016/17

23. Prevention Charter for Somerset (Agenda Item 12)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report and advised that the Health and Wellbeing Board would be the lead organisation to champion the Charter.

During discussion, Members felt the Charter could help to provide connectivity through new developments and create safe pathways to encourage walking, running and cycling to improve fitness. It was also regretted that in Somerset, Doctors were no longer able to refer people to slimming classes and the Portfolio Holder agreed to report this to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members agreed that the Chairman and Chief Executive sign the Somerset Prevention Charter on behalf of South Somerset District Council.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed to commit to signing up to the Somerset Prevention Charter on behalf of South Somerset District Council.

Reason: To commit South Somerset to the Vision and Principles of prevention, in the widest sense as detailed in the Somerset Prevention Charter.

24. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13)

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Community Governance Review Request from Barwick Parish Council – August / September 2017
 - Approval of South Somerset Early Review Local Plan Issues and Options Issues document for consultation – moved to October 2017

- Authority Monitoring Report – November 2017
- Yeovil Town Centre Markets – moved to November 2017
- CIL Governance – Policy to decide how funds are allocated – moved to December 2017

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

25. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 3rd August 2017 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

26. Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda Item 15)

RESOLVED: That the following item be considered in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

27. Property Investment Acquisition for Income Generation (Confidential) (Agenda Item 16)

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation advised that the Executive had previously allocated funding for property investment for income generation. The proposed purchase would gain both a property asset and an income stream from the lease. She responded to Members questions on points of detail.

During discussion, the confidentiality of the proposal was discussed and it was impressed upon Members that the financial details of the transaction should remain confidential.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members unanimously confirmed the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. approved the recommendation that SSDC acquires a property investment for income generation purposes;
- b. authorised the S151 Officer to determine the most economical approach to financing the investment in line with the principles agreed for the Renewables, Property Investment and Development Project Fund;

- c. delegated authority to the Director (Commercial Services and Income Generation) and the Director (Support Services) to act on SSDC's behalf to oversee and complete the property transaction.

Reason: To agree the acquisition of a property investment for income generation purposes.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

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Chairman

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Date