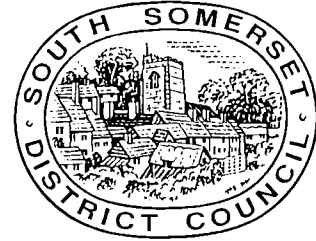


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



South Somerset District Council

Making a difference where it counts

Thursday 21st September 2017

7.30 pm

**Council Chamber
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil, BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



All members of Council are requested to attend this meeting.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Manager on 01935 462148 or democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 13 September 2017.

Ian Clarke, Director (Support Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk and via the mod.gov app



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

South Somerset District Council Membership

Chairman: Mike Best
Vice-chairman: Tony Capozzoli

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

Information for the Public

The meetings of the full Council, comprising all 60 members of South Somerset District Council, are held at least 6 times a year. The full Council approves the Council's budget and the major policies which comprise the Council's policy framework. Other decisions which the full Council has to take include appointing the Leader of the Council, members of the District Executive, other Council Committees and approving the Council's Constitution (which details how the Council works including the scheme allocating decisions and Council functions to committees and officers).

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the Council are scheduled to be held monthly at 7.30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way although some dates are only reserve dates and may not be needed.

The agenda, minutes and the timetable for council meetings are published on the Council's website – www.southsomerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/meetings-and-decisions

Agendas and minutes can also be viewed via the mod.gov app (free) available for iPads and Android devices. Search for 'mod.gov' in the app store for your device and select 'South Somerset' from the list of publishers and then select the committees of interest. A wi-fi signal will be required for a very short time to download an agenda but once downloaded, documents will be viewable offline.

The Council's corporate aims which guide the work of the Council are set out below.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

South Somerset District Council - Council Aims

South Somerset will be a confident, resilient and flexible organisation, protecting and improving core services, delivering public priorities and acting in the best long-term interests of the district. We will:

- Protect core services to the public by reducing costs and seeking income generation.
- Increase the focus on Jobs and Economic Development.
- Protect and enhance the quality of our environment.
- Enable housing to meet all needs.
- Improve health and reduce health inequalities.

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South Somerset District Council

Thursday 21 September 2017

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday, 17th August 2017.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. Where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council.

4. Public Question Time

5. Chairman's Announcements

Items for Discussion

6. Chairman's Engagements (Page 6)

7. Business Rates Relief - New Local Discretionary Relief Scheme (Pages 7 - 17)

8. Section 151 Officer Arrangements (Pages 18 - 19)

9. Appointment of temporary Councillors to Langport Town Council (Pages 20 - 21)

10. Report of Executive Decisions (Pages 22 - 23)

11. Audit Committee

There was no meeting of the Audit Committee during August 2017.

12. Scrutiny Committee (Pages 24 - 26)

13. Motions

There were no Motions submitted by Members.

14. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

15. Date of Next Meeting (Page 27)

Agenda Item 6

Chairman's Engagements

12th July

The Vice-Chairman attended the Samaritans Annual General Meeting held at St Mary's Hall, Holy Trinity Centre, Yeovil.

12th August

At the invitation of the Mayor of Yeovil, the Chairman attended the Yeovil Town Council Civic Day.

3rd September

The Chairman and his wife attended the Sedgemoor Civic Service held at St Mary's Church, Bridgwater.

Agenda Item 7

Business Rates Relief – New Local Discretionary Relief

Executive Portfolio Holder: Peter Seib, Finance and Legal Services
Director: Ian Clarke, Director – Support Services
Service Manager: Ian Potter, Revenues and Benefits Manager
Lead Officer: Sharon Jones, Revenues Team Leader, Revenues and Benefits
Contact Details: Sharon.jones@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462256

Purpose of the Report

1. To request that Full Council approve the use of the Council's local discount powers to introduce the proposed "Revaluation Support Relief" Scheme to support businesses that have been adversely affected by Business Rates Revaluation on 1 April 2017.

Public Interest

2. The Rating List contains details of the rateable value assigned to all types of premises subject to Business Rates. The rateable value is used to calculate the Business Rates charge for each entry in the list. A Business Rates Revaluation normally takes place every five years resulting in a new Rating List being introduced. The latest revaluation was due to take effect from 01 April 2015 but was delayed by two years. This means the new rating list came in to effect from 1 April 2017. A Transitional Relief Scheme is introduced with each new rating list. This phases in the changes to rateable values. In the Spring Budget the Government announced a Discretionary Relief Scheme and package of funding to support those businesses most adversely affected by the revaluation. The design and administration of these schemes is for authorities to decide.

Recommendation

3. That Full Council approve a new local discretionary rate relief, The "Non Domestic Rates Revaluation Support Relief" Scheme, effective from 1 April 2017 as detailed below.

Background

4. In the Chancellor's Spring Budget, the Government announced a package of measures to support business rate payers following the introduction of the new rating list. The measures are:
5. Supporting Small Businesses relief and Business Rate Relief Scheme for Pubs
These measures have already been approved at District Executive 6 April 2017. For reference more details on these schemes can be found in Annex A.
6. New Discretionary Rate Relief
The establishment of a £300m discretionary fund over four years from 2017-18 to support those businesses that face the steepest increases in their business rates bills as a result of the 2017 revaluation. Billing authorities were expected to develop their own discretionary relief schemes to deliver targeted support to those who are facing an increase in their bills following revaluation.
7. In working out the grant to be paid to each billing authority out of the discretionary fund referred to in paragraph 7 the following methodology has been used by Government:
 - a) the rateable property has a rateable value for 2017-18 that is less than £200,000;
 - b) the increase in the rateable property's 2017-18 bill is more than 12.5% compared to its 2016-17 bill (before reliefs)

8. South Somerset District Council has been allocated the following funding and intends to use it discretionary powers to introduce a new local discretionary rate relief:

Year	Amount of funding
2017/18	£526k
2018/19	£255k
2019/20	£105k
2020/21	£15k

Proposed Non Domestic Rates Revaluation Support Relief Scheme

9. South Somerset's scheme has been designed to primarily follow the criteria used by the government when allocating the funding to local authorities. The proposed scheme for SSDC to adopt is as follows:

10. Conditions of the relief:

- There has been an increase in liability of more than 12.5% after transitional relief, small business rate relief, mandatory rural rate relief and mandatory charity relief have been applied.
- The ratepayer must have been registered on our IT System and in continuous occupation since 31 March 2017 (Relief will not be applied where a ratepayer claims occupation retrospectively)
- Those properties entitled to Supporting Small Business Rate relief or Small Business extension relief will not be entitled to this relief
- Properties must be on the rating list as at 1 April 2017. (Relief will not apply where properties are entered into the list retrospectively).

11. Where a qualifying ratepayer's 2017/18 and, or 2016/17 rates bill is reduced for any of the reasons listed below their Revaluation Support Rate relief will be reduced or removed accordingly.

- A relevant change in the rateable value of an entry in the 2010 and, or 2017 rating lists.
- A successful application of any other type of rate relief or exemption.
- Where the rate payer vacates the property.

There will be no increases in Revaluation Support Relief awards as a result of a rateable value entry change. However if they have suffered hardship as a result they may make an application for relief from the reserve fund (see below).

12. Based on the available funding, it is proposed that discretionary relief at the following percentages of the net increase in the bill for 2017/18 would be granted:

Financial year	Percentage relief of net increase for those with RV under 200,000	Percentage relief of net increase for those with RV over 200,000
2017/18	43%	15%
2018/19	21%	7%
2019/20	8.5%	3%
2020/19	0%	0%

13. If we are permitted to transfer funds between years, or if the take up of the relief is low or if the policy is not meeting the objectives, then a review of the policy and the level of assistance that can be provided will be undertaken.

14. A reserve fund will be retained for those businesses: (i) that do not qualify for Revaluation Support Relief and (ii) who have experienced an increase in business rates due to the revaluation, and (iii) who have suffered hardship as a result and (iv) whose circumstances are such that the authority wishes to provide them with assistance. This is a limited fund which is retained from the government allocation each year and once the fund has been spent no further applications will be considered. Hardship applications will be managed in the same manner as other reliefs.

Reserve fund

Financial year	Total reserve fund
2017/18	£44,000
2018/19	£22,000
2019/20	£10,000
2020/21	£15,000

15. Relief from taxes, including non-domestic rates, can constitute state aid. Therefore the granting of this relief will be subject to the business having received less than €200,000 state aid in the current and previous 2 years. In all cases ratepayers will be required to provide the Council with sufficient information to determine whether these provisions are applicable in their case.
16. Several options for the scheme were discussed and rejected at Scrutiny Task and Finish. Consideration was given to a relief for everyone where they had an increase and also an increase cap of 12.5% was considered. Full details of the considerations can be found in the scrutiny report which is attached as Annex B
17. Major preceptors have been consulted on the scheme. The Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Service have raised no objections to the proposal. We have not yet had a response from Avon and Somerset Police Authority or Somerset County Council.

Financial Implications

18. Where the Council uses its local discount powers to introduce the New Local Discretionary relief to be known as “Revaluation Support Relief” as described above the cost will be reimbursed in full by Government.
19. Any amendments to the proposed scheme which would increase the cost of it above the government allocation will result in a direct cost to SSDC.

Council Plan Implications

20. The proposed policy supports the “Economy” Priority - To promote a strong economy with thriving urban and rural businesses.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

21. None associated with this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

22. EQA completed and there is no impact on this report.

Privacy Impact Assessment

23. Consideration has been given to the Privacy impact assessment and as there is not direct marketing implications there is no impact. A privacy statement will be included with the application forms.

Background Papers

Business Information letter confirming Sprint Budget measures

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/598272/BRIL_2-2017_Budget_Measures.pdf

Business Information letter confirming guidance for spring budget measures

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/42017-spring-budget-update>

Confirmation of the fund to be allocated to Authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/discretionary-business-rates-relief-scheme>

DX report where approval was given for Supporting Small Business Relief and Pub Relief

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s15395/8%20Business%20Rates%20Relief%20-%20Spring%20Budget%20Measures%202017.pdf>

Supporting Small Businesses relief

The Supporting Small Businesses Relief is designed to help ratepayers who as a result of the change in their rateable value at the revaluation are losing some or all of their Small Business or Rural Rate Relief and, as a result, are facing large increases in their bills.

The Supporting Small Businesses Relief will ensure that the increase per year in the bills of these ratepayers is limited to the greater of:

- a) a cash value of £600 per year (£50 per month). This cash minimum increase ensures that those ratepayers currently paying nothing or very small amounts are brought into paying something, or
- b) the matching cap on increases for small properties in the transitional relief scheme [The cap being 5% for 2017/18, 7.5% for 2018/19, 10% for 2019/20, 15% for 2020/21 and 15% for 2021/22]

Formal guidance on the operation of the scheme including more complex cases and future financial years has been provided. We have 56 ratepayers entitled to this relief and they have been informed and instalments reduced pending the ability to award the relief on our system.

Business Rate Relief Scheme for Pubs

The Government introduced a new relief scheme for pubs that have a rateable value of below £100,000. Under the scheme, eligible pubs will receive a £1000 discount on their 2017/18 bill. This is a one year relief scheme. DCLG have now published guidance as shown below:

The Government's policy intention is that eligible pubs should:

- be open to the general public
- allow free entry other than when occasional entertainment is provided
- allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed
- permit drinks to be purchased at a bar.

For these purposes, it should exclude:

- restaurants
- cafes
- nightclubs
- hotels
- snack bars
- guesthouses
- boarding houses
- sporting venues
- music venues
- festival sites
- theatres
- museums
- exhibition halls
- cinemas

There are 116 pubs in our area that would be eligible for this relief and applications have been sent to all ratepayers.



Non Domestic Rate (Business Rates) Revaluation Support Relief Policy

Report and Findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

August 2017

Chair's Foreword

The Chancellor announced as part of the budget on 8th March that the Government would provide a £300 million discretionary fund for four years from 2017-18 to support those businesses and organisations most adversely affected by the revaluation of business rates.

The government has assumed that authorities will provide support only to those ratepayers who are facing a significant increase in their bills as a result of revaluation; South Somerset District Council has been allocated £901,000 for the four years.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to conduct a Task and Finish review to help inform the Revaluation Support Relief Policy looking to provide a scheme that will aid those business and organisations across South Somerset who have suffered the greatest increases and to make the most of the funding available.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the officers who supported us on this review. Thanks to their efforts providing timely information and evidence the Task and Finish group have been able to make informed decisions and produce this report in a very short period of time.

Sue Steele

Scrutiny Committee Chair

Task and Finish Group Membership

Councillor Sue Steele - Chair of Task and Finish Group
Councillor Gerard Tucker
Councillor Carol Goodall

All members worked collectively with the support of Jo Gale – Overview and Scrutiny Manager and the Project Officer Group:

James Gilgrist – Economic Development Officer
Sharon Jones – Revenues Team Leader
Ashley Smalley – Business Rates Officer

The Work of the Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish Group commenced work in June to consider how best to allocate funding from Central Government to help businesses and organisations who as a result of the Business Rate Revaluation 2017 have been adversely affected. The group had the following ambitions:

- To achieve the criteria as prescribed by Government whilst ensuring the scheme is not administratively burdensome. (Staff will have to manually calculate the awards as the charges to have the system altered are disproportional).
- To ensure the application process is easy and accessible to ensure no one is deterred from applying.
- To maximise the use of the grant.
- To work in a timely manner to inform the policy quickly to ensure businesses and organisations receive the support in a timely manner.
- The policy is informed by evidence and therefore reflects local need.
- Equalities are considered throughout the policy creation process.

At the initial Task and Finish meeting the group were presented with the background information of the revaluation relief grant, the rationale and the calculation for the sum of the grant and the conditions surrounding the grant:

- The Council is not allowed to put additional conditions or criteria around the provision of the grant, for example you cannot request a business or organisation undertakes a specific activity or spends the grant on specific activities or items.
- The award of the revaluation support complies with European Union state aid limits.

The group reviewed how the revaluation had affected businesses and organisations across South Somerset to understand the specific impact on individuals and the impact across different sectors (this identified warehouses and factories as the most adversely affected). The group then proceeded to discuss potential different options and approaches, including:

- Using the government's rationale and calculation of the grant as the basis of the policy.
- Providing funding to those of the retail industry in an ambition to support retail centres.

- Awarding a fixed amount across all those affected.
- Using a hardship based criteria, providing the grant to help those that truly need it.
- Excluding national and multi-national businesses and companies.

After much discussion of the differing options members concluded:

- The fairest approach was to provide support that was proportional to the increase that had been incurred.
- It was not appropriate to single out any particular sector as all sectors had been adversely affected and without being able to apply any conditions to the support it is impossible to ensure the support is used to maintain a specific sector or service in a given area.
- It was not appropriate to cut off the support for properties with a Rateable Value of up to £200,000, many of the businesses and organisations across South Somerset that have been adversely affected are larger premises but this does not mean they have a greater ability to afford the substantial increase.
- To only provide revaluation support where significant hardship could be proven as a result of revaluation would be complex and incredibly time consuming in terms of staff resource. It may not maximise the grant. The businesses and organisations that are in greatest need could be deterred from applying particularly if substantial evidence needs to be provided.
- National and multi-national companies should be eligible to apply as these provide employment and contribute to the economy; we do not want to put our relationship with these companies at risk.

The group agreed based on the evidence of impact on cases across South Somerset, the preferred approach is to apply a percentage based grant award to those who are most adversely affected.

Members explored applying numerous different value caps (how much of an increase the business or organisation has incurred) with different combinations, Rateable Values (RV) and percentages of support given. The group agreed no matter where the support were to start from there would always be some business and organisations that would fall outside of the policy that would still be adversely affected by revaluation and could struggle to manage; it was agreed that monies should be allocated to a special hardship fund for those business and organisations to apply for, and that awards from this should be on case by case basis.

The group resolved the best balance of award was to provide the following percentages of support:

Financial year	Percentage relief for those with RV under 200,000 where they have suffered a net increase of more than 12.5%	Percentage relief for those with RV over 200,000 where they have suffered a net increase of more than 12.5%
2017/18	43%	15%
2018/19	21%	7%
2019/20	8.5%	3%
2020/21	0%	0%

Members agreed that the award for those with properties with a rateable value over £200,000 should be less as the sums of money to individual businesses or organisations would be so large and could be considered a disproportional share of the funding.

To illustrate this I have provided the range of relief for 2017/18:

For premises with a Rateable Value under £200,000 the relief provided will be £90 up to £10,770 – total 230 cases

For premises with a Rateable Value over £200,000 the relief provided will be £2,442 up to £20,859 – total 22 cases

The net 12.5 percent Increase was agreed by members as the appropriate starting point as this is a proportional substantial increase. Anything less than this would result in hundreds of extra cases and the smallest amounts awarded would be in the tens of pounds and this would be disproportionate administration to beneficial impact.

This method of award provides a special hardship fund of:

Financial year	Total reserve fund
2017/18	£44,000
2018/19	£22,000
2019/20	£10,000
2020/21	£15,000

This funding would only be available to those who are not receiving revaluation support; the fund will be awarded on a first come first served basis.

The group requested that the take up of the Revaluation Support is monitored and the revenues team look for any patterns of businesses or organisations falling into arrears to ensure we are maximising the funding and utilising it in the best possible way.

Members agreed where Transitional, Charity, Small Business Rate and Rural Rate Relief is awarded, revaluation support relief will be given on the net amount payable. Where a pub has been awarded the £1000 one year discount the revaluation relief is given in additional to the Revaluation Support Relief as this is a once off award and was intended to specifically aid pubs (there are 17 across South Somerset).

Equalities and proportionality

The group considered equalities and proportionality throughout the review. It was not possible to gauge the impact of the Revaluation Support Relief on those with protected characteristics as we only hold the ratepayers name and no further information.

Risks

Other Authorities exclude national and multi-national ratepayers from applying for revaluation support. Therefore SSDC receives applications from all national and multi-national business and organisations occupying properties in South Somerset consequently reducing the amount of support that could be given to local businesses and organisations only. The figures provided in the proposed scheme have costed for this.

Large numbers of ratepayers who have had a net increase of less than 12.5 percent apply to the hardship relief scheme and the fund runs out. Each ratepayer applying to the scheme has to demonstrate that the increase in rates payable as a consequence of revaluation is causing hardship and that with assistance from the hardship fund they will be able to introduce changes that will ensure they will be able to manage longer term. The hardship fund is to assist short term only not to help a struggling business or organisation to survive a

few extra months. The sums in the hardship fund could increase should government agree to roll monies forward to future years (as at the time of writing this report we have not had any information to suggest if this is being considered) and not everyone who has incurred a 12.5 percent increase or greater apply to the revaluation support relief fund. (This will be widely promoted and everyone will be contacted directly so it will only be those ratepayers who cannot qualify for an award due to State Aid funding limits or who just don't want or need to).

Summary of Task and Finish Group's Recommendations for the Scheme

1. The revaluation support relief provides relief based on the following percentage calculations:

Financial year	Percentage relief for those with RV under 200,000 where they have suffered a net increase of more than 12.5%	Percentage relief for those with RV over 200,000 where they have suffered a net increase of more than 12.5%
2017/18	43%	15%
2018/19	21%	7%
2019/20	8.5%	3%
2020/21	0%	0%

2. A special hardship fund as detailed below is provided to help those who do not qualify for the above and is awarded on a case by case basis:

Financial year	Total reserve fund
2017/18	£44,000
2018/19	£22,000
2019/20	£10,000
2020/21	£15,000

3. Where Transitional, Charity, Small Business Rate and Rural Rate Relief is awarded, revaluation support relief will be given on the net amount payable.
4. Where a pub has been awarded the £1000 one year discount the revaluation relief is given in additional to the Revaluation Support Relief as this is a once off award and was intended to specifically aid pubs.

Summary of Task and Finish Group's Recommendations relating to working practices

1. The new revaluation support relief is directly promoted to every ratepayer and can be applied for via telephone, online or in writing or a simple application form to ensure the award is accessible as possible and no-one is deterred from applying.
2. The award take up is monitored and the policy is reviewed in year to ensure the policy is effective and maximising the use of the grant.

Agenda Item 8

Section 151 Officer Arrangements

Executive Portfolio Holder: Cllr Peter Seib, Finance and Legal Services
Chief Executive Officer: Alex Parmley
Lead Officer: Ian Clarke, Director - Support Services
Contact Details: ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462184

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the extension of the Council's existing arrangements for a Section 151 Officer/Chief Finance.

Public Interest

2. There is a legal requirement on the Council to designate three "Statutory Officers". These are the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Monitoring Officer (Director Support Services) and the Section 151 Officer/ Chief Finance Officer. The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and is required by law to be a suitably qualified individual holding a recognised professional accountancy qualification. The previously agreed 6 months' arrangement is about to expire so action needs to be taken now to address this.

Recommendations

3. That Council:
 - a) agrees that Paul Fitzgerald continue to be this Council's designated Section 151 Officer until such time as either this Council or Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset District Council serves notice on the other to end this arrangement.
 - b) Agrees that the existing arrangements for and nomination of the Deputy Section 151 Officer and Deputy Chief Finance Officer who is authorised to act in the absence of the Section 151 Officer continue until further notice.

Background

4. Members will recall that at the Council meeting in April 2017 they agreed to share the S151 officer from Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset District Council for a period of 6 months from 21st April 2017. That 6 month period is about to expire. It is felt that the arrangement has worked very well and the officer concerned has developed good working relationships with both officers and members. In addition no material or significant issues have arisen during this 6 month period which would suggest to either members or officers at either Council that some alternative provision needs to be made for the future. It is considered overall that the arrangement has been successful for all parties. On that basis it is recommended that Council agrees to extend the existing working arrangement until such time as either party decides to end it by serving not less than 3 months' notice on the other.
5. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, there is a statutory requirement on the authority to designate three statutory officers; Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer/ Chief Finance Officer, who is

required to be a suitably qualified individual, holding a recognised professional accountancy qualification.

6. Taunton Deane Borough Council & West Somerset District Council have already confirmed that they are happy to extend the arrangement on these terms. In essence Paul will continue the same working practices and continue to carry out the core Section 151 work which was outlined in the previous report.
7. The cost for the provision of this service will be as previously advised (although likely to subject to an annual review in future) and the cost can continue to be met from existing budgets. As previously the service being provided to the Council will be kept under review at 6 monthly intervals to ensure that the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs continues to be delivered under this arrangement. The notice provision is to provide a degree of flexibility should the needs of either party change in the future. As members were previously advised, other officers in the Finance Team have taken on additional responsibilities to ensure that a full "finance" service is being provided to the Council.
8. As mentioned elsewhere in this report the designation of a Section 151 and Chief Finance Officer is a statutory requirement. The continuation of this arrangement ensures the Council will be complying with legislation.

Council Plan Implications

None associated with this report

Equality and Diversity Implications

None associated with this report

Privacy Impact Assessment

None associated with this report

Background Papers

None associated with this report

Agenda Item 9

Appointment of temporary Councillors to Langport Town Council

Lead Officer: Ian Clarke, Director - Support Services
Contact Details: ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462184

Purpose

To seek Members approval for the temporary appointment of three people to Langport Town Council to allow them to progress urgent business, until an election can be held to appoint new Town Councillors.

Recommendations

That Council agrees to:-

1. the appointment of the following persons as temporary members of Langport Town Council until such time as an election can be held and those elected have taken up office:

Mr Gerard Tucker
Mr Crispin Raikes
Mrs Clare Aparicio Paul
2. authorise the Director (Support Services) to make the necessary Order under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 with effect from 22nd September 2017.

Background

Following a Parish meeting called by electors of the parish to discuss the future of the Hanging Chapel in Langport, the Town Clerk has received 7 resignations from Town Councillors, including the Chairman of the Town Council.

Langport Town Council comprises of 11 Councillors. Normally the quorum of a Town Council meeting is three or one third of the total membership whichever is greater, however, the Town Council have a Standing Order which states their minimum quorum for a meeting is five.

South Somerset District Council now need to appoint temporary councillors, sufficient for there to be a quorum for them to conduct urgent items of business in the interim period and, to assist in the notification of vacancies and election of new Town Councillors.

In the interim, the Clerk will continue to preserve the day to day business of the Town Council and he has confirmed that negotiations with the tenants of the Hanging Chapel have been postponed until after the vacancies that have been created by these resignations have been filled.

Report

There are now so many vacancies on the Town Council that it is unable to act. Its quorum is five members. With fewer than five members the Town Council cannot act. It cannot co-opt new councillors or exercise any of its functions. The Local Government Act 1972

gives this council the power to take action in such cases. This Council, pursuant to an Order made under Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972, can appoint persons to fill such of the vacancies on the Town Council as is appropriate to allow the Town Council to progress urgent business, until such time as the election of new Town Councillors can take place and those elected take up office.

Accordingly, three District Councillors have agreed to act as temporary Town Councillors for Langport for this interim period to enable the Town Council to continue to function.

Timescale

If an election is called by ten electors for the Parish of Langport, then an election to fill the vacancies will be held in early October 2017. It is anticipated that the temporary appointments will be up to this period only as it is envisaged that sufficient people will stand for election to provide the necessary quorum. Any new members take up office upon making their declaration of acceptance of office in the prescribed form before or at the first meeting of the Town Council after the election. The SSDC appointed Town Councillors will then step down.

Financial Implications

There is currently budget provision made for members' travel expenses to attend approved duties. These appointments would be classed as approved duties.

If an election is called to fill the vacancies then the majority of the cost will be reclaimed from the Town Council.

Background Papers

Section 91, Local Government Act 1972,
E-mail correspondence from the Clerk to Langport Town Council and author's working papers

Agenda Item 10

Report of Executive Decisions

Lead Officer: Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
Contact Details: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

This report is submitted for information and summarises decisions taken by the District Executive and Portfolio Holders since the last meeting of Council in August 2017. The decisions are set out in the attached Appendix.

Members are invited to ask any questions of the Portfolio Holders.

Background Papers

All Published

Ric Pallister, Leader of the Council
Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

Appendix

Portfolio	Subject	Decision	Taken By	Date
Strategy and Policy	Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 1st Quarter	That the District Executive noted the Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 1st Quarter.	District Executive	07/09/17
Leisure and Culture	Westlands Entertainment & Conference Centre Refurbishment Project	That the District Executive noted the report on the Westlands Entertainment & Conference Centre Refurbishment Project including the closure of the refurbishment project.	District Executive	07/09/17
Finance and Legal Services	Business Rates Relief - New Local Discretionary Relief	This report was recommended to Council and appears elsewhere on the agenda.	District Executive	07/09/17
Finance and Legal Services	Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan	That District Executive agreed to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. approve the Financial Strategy; b. note the current position and timetable for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget estimates; c. approve an allocation of £34,900 to passport Revenue Support Grant as Council Tax Reduction Grant funding to town and parish councils in 2018/19, and approve no passport of funds in 2019/20 when SSDC will no longer receive Revenue Support Grant income. 	District Executive	07/09/17

Agenda Item 12

Scrutiny Committee

This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Committee since 17 August 2017.

The committee met on 5 September 2017 to consider:

- Technology Implementation Update from Technology Implementation Manager and Darren Cole (Consultant)
- The findings and report of the Non Domestic Rate (Business Rates) Revaluation Support Relief Policy Task and Finish Group
- Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4th August
- All current Task and Finish work to date and future priorities

Further information relating to each of these areas of work is detailed below:

Technology Implementation Update

Scrutiny Committee requested an update report to get a better understanding of the implementation process to date and going forward, including customer and residents input to the design. Also to seek re-assurance that SSDC was utilising the learning and experiences from other authorities who had been and were going through similar processes.

At the conclusion of discussion, members had no concerns and felt much better informed with regard to the technology aspect of transformation, including how it will improve member access to information. It was agreed that a future update report would be made to Scrutiny Committee when there are specific points of interest to inform members, whether good or bad, or milestones reached.

The findings and report of the Non Domestic Rate (Business Rates) Revaluation Support Relief Policy Task and Finish Group

The Task and Finish groups full report is included in this agenda and all members endorsed the recommendations

Reports on the District Executive Agenda for the 4th August, Scrutiny Committee provided the comments as listed below:

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4th August

Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18 – 1st Quarter

Para 8 - Scrutiny noted that there was still no reference to performance monitoring from a customer perspective. There is a need to know when changes are implemented if and how they are affecting the public.

It was acknowledged during the transition through Transformation it would be difficult to produce statistics at 'in between' stages. Members sought reassurance that there would be more Performance Indicators in the future, and that indicators should be easily understood.

It was felt the indicators need to be reviewed and perhaps using the Council Plan as a starting point. Outputs, especially regarding customer service, need to be monitored.

Members were pleased that baseline measures will be maintained to be able to monitor trends.

Westlands Entertainment and Conference Centre Refurbishment Project

Scrutiny sought clarification that Westlands is projected to be cost neutral or better, and queried the timeframes envisaged until the facility breaks even or makes a surplus.

It was noted this report was the first statement of actual overspend and members commented it would be useful to see a full reconciliation to indicate how the overspend affects the overall SSDC accounts.

Members sought clarity about whether the following were included in the project spend as detailed in para 41:

- Dealing with aspects of vandalism which had not been possible to claim under insurance
- Work to the first floor to enable office space to be let to a tenant.
- Work to the sports hall and fitness suite
- Artists Walkway

Members sought reassurance that the risk management is up to date

Members expressed disappointment that Bingo groups were still awaiting a licence to use Westlands.

Financial Strategy and Medium Term Financial Plan

Para 15 – the table refers to service prioritisation as TBC. Scrutiny queried that as there is a wish to not cut services, how are the savings going to be identified?

Referring to a recent LGA Enterprising Councils document, members noted that key learning points from other authorities in particular Sevenoaks that had gone through similar transformation processes, had been to talk and engage with the public. This didn't seem to have been done yet here, and it was queried if there was intention to consult with the public, and if so how and when?

Regarding an increase in fees and charges, members queried what would happen regarding fees where there is less opportunity to make changes due to legislation?

Scrutiny sought reassurance that Transformation was on target to deliver the projected savings.

Members raised concern that changes to car parking fees were being considered at a time when many 'pay and display' spaces in Yeovil seemed to be under-used during peak weekday lunch break hours.

District Executive Forward Plan

Members queried the report due to October regarding 'Consideration of Local Plan Review Issues and Options Document for Consultation'. Scrutiny members were unclear about the purpose of the report and requested that all members be kept informed about reports due to come forward regarding the Local Plan.

Task and Finish work

Council Tax Support - A new Task and Finish Group is scheduled to start in October, an invitation has been sent to all non-executive members to help inform proposals with the Finance and Legal Services Portfolio Holder

Homefinder Somerset Plain English Policy – Awaiting feedback from Housing, no further updates.

Car Park Charges - Scrutiny Committee have agreed terms of reference for the review Councillors John Clark, Carol Goodall, David Norris, and David Bulmer have already expressed an interest in being part of the group, all members will have an opportunity to contribute suggestions and provide comments as part of the Task and Finish review groups work.

Locality Working - District Executive have indicated they would be interested in Scrutiny involvement with the development of the Locality aspect of the Future Model and there was an appetite from Scrutiny members. However, there are no timescales at the moment and involvement would be informed by the Ignite programme.

Agenda Item 15

Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council is a reserve date of 19th October 2017. Unless there is any urgent business to progress on this date, the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council will take place on **Thursday, 16th November 2017** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 7.30 p.m.
