

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 16 November 2017** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT

(7.30 pm - 8.30 pm)

### **Present:**

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

Clare Aparicio Paul	Kaysar Hussain	Sylvia Seal
Jason Baker	Val Keitch	Gina Seaton
Cathy Bakewell	Andy Kendall	Peter Seib
Neil Bloomfield	Mike Lewis	Angie Singleton
Amanda Broom	Mike Lock	Alan Smith
Dave Bulmer	Tony Lock	Sue Steele
Hayward Burt	Graham Middleton	Rob Stickland
Nick Colbert	David Norris	Gerard Tucker
Adam Dance	Graham Oakes	Andrew Turpin
Sarah Dyke	Sue Osborne	Linda Vijeh
John Field	Ric Pallister	Martin Wale
Nigel Gage	David Recardo	Nick Weeks
Anna Groskop	Jo Roundell Greene	Colin Winder
Peter Gubbins	Dean Ruddle	Derek Yeomans

### **Officers**

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Commissioning)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Nicola Hix	Lead Specialist (Finance)
Angela Watson	Lead Specialist (Legal)
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Specialist
Becky Sanders	Case Services Officer (Support Services)

At the beginning of the meeting the Chairman asked everyone present to stand and observe a minute of silence, in memory of Ian Clarke (Director - Support Services and Solicitor to the Council) who had passed away suddenly on 11<sup>th</sup> November.

Tributes were then paid to Mr Clarke by the following: Deputy Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader on behalf of the Leader of Council, Leader of the Conservative Group, Leader of the Independent Group, Vice Chairman of the Council, Chairman of Scrutiny Committee, Chairman of Area West Committee, Chairman of Standards Committee and the Chairman of the Council.

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## **76. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marcus Barrett, Mike Beech, John Clark, Carol Goodall, Henry Hobhouse, Sarah Lindsay, Sam McAllister, Tiffany Osborne, Stephen Page, Crispin Raikes, Wes Read and William Wallace.

An apology for a late arrival was received from Councillor Ric Pallister.

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#### **77. Minutes (Agenda Item 2)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> Sept 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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#### **78. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

Councillors Clare Aparicio Paul, Mike Best, Neil Bloomfield, Amanda Broom, Adam Dance, Anna Groskop, Andy Kendal, Mike Lewis, Tony Lock, Dean Ruddle and Linda Vijeh each declared a personal interest for agenda item 7 – Notification of Urgent Executive Decision – Somerset Business Rate Pool and 100% Business Rate Retention Pilot, as they are also members of Somerset County Council which is in the pool.

Councillor Peter Gubbins declared a prejudicial interest for agenda item 8 - Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2017/18 Mid-Year Review, due to his relationship to one of the report authors. He noted he would leave the room for that item.

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

There were no questions from members of the public present at the meeting.

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

The Chairman did not make any announcements, but handed over to the Chief Executive who wished to make a statement.

The Chief Executive noted the sudden passing of Ian Clarke (Director - Support Services) was a massive loss to SSDC and thoughts were with his family. He explained that Ian Clarke had held a number of important roles in the Council and, as uncomfortable as it seemed, the roles had to be addressed in order for the Council to function properly and discharge its business. Under the Constitution a number of the roles and functions were appointed by Council, but as Chief Executive he had the ability to make temporary appointments to such roles. He formally notified Council of the temporary appointments he had made to roles with immediate effect, as follows:

- Monitoring Officer – Angela Watson (Legal Services Manager)
- Electoral Registration Officer – Alex Parmley (Chief Executive)
- Returning Officer – Alex Parmley (Chief Executive)
- Line management reporting and Transformation (Phase 1: Support Services) Sponsor – Netta Meadows (Director – Strategy and Commissioning)

The Chief Executive noted that time was needed to consider fulfilling of the roles in the long term, and he would liaise with group leaders in taking this forward.

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

The list of Chairman's Engagements was noted.

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## **82. Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision - Somerset Business Rate Pool and 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot (Agenda Item 7)**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Legal Services introduced the report and noted the reasons for urgency, and asked members to endorse the decisions taken. He also highlighted the reasons for recommending that delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, regarding remaining in the pool in the future and the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot scheme.

During discussion, the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Legal Services and the S.151 Officer, responded to points of detail including information about the pool, the submitted application to government, the position of the contingency reserve, and risks to business rates in respect of the new Hinkley Point nuclear power station.

In response to other comments made about the Business Rate Pool during discussion, the Leader highlighted that the short timeframes involved with the 30 day financial settlement consultation period, meant there would be little opportunity for the matter to go through Scrutiny, and it may not be possible to follow normal due process.

The Leader also noted that a report regarding the Heart of the South West Joint Committee was now likely to come to Council in January rather than December.

There being no further debate, the recommendations were approved, 41 in favour, 0 against, with 3 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

- a) Endorsed the urgent decision, made by the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and the Finance & Legal Services Portfolio Holder, that the Council participates in the pooling arrangement with other Somerset authorities (Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Taunton Deane Borough Council, West Somerset Council) under the 50% Business Rates Retention scheme for 2018/19.
- b) Endorsed the urgent decision to apply to Government for the Somerset Business Rates Pool comprising the county and five districts to become a pilot area for 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19 financial year.
- c) Approved delegated authority to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services, to decide whether to remain in the Pool, if approved by Government, the 100% BRR Pilot scheme when the Government's Provisional

Settlement details are announced in December 2017.

**Reason:** To advise Council of an urgent decision made by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Finance and Legal Services Portfolio Holder, in relation to a submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to become a pilot for the 100% Business Rates Retention in 2018/19.

*(Voting: 41 in favour, 0 against, 3 abstentions)*

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**83. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2017/18 - Mid-year review (Agenda Item 8)**

Councillor Derek Yeomans, as Chairman of the Audit Committee, introduced the report and noted some concerns had been raised at Audit Committee about some of the Prudential Indicators.

There was no debate and Members unanimously approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

**RESOLVED:** That Council approved the revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18 (Strategy attached with the amendments highlighted).

**Reason:** To confirm the revised mid-year Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy for 2017/18.

*(Voting: Unanimous)*

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**84. Increase in Councillors and change of name of Barwick Parish Council - Community Governance Review (CGR) (Agenda Item 9)**

The Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services noted that a valid request had been received from Barwick Parish Council to increase the number of Parish Councillors and to change the name of the Parish Council. The necessary public consultation would be conducted by a Community Governance Review and she highlighted the process and timeframes involved.

In response to a query raised during a very brief discussion, she clarified that the consultation would be done by posters and other publicity rather than by leaflets to every household in the parish.

There was no further discussion and members unanimously agreed to a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Barwick being undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

1. Noted the receipt of the request and its validity;
2. Agreed to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Parish of Barwick;
3. Agreed the Terms of Reference of the review as detailed in

Appendix A, including the timetable and arrangements for public consultation;

4. Agreed that the review will be carried out by the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with Ward Members, Area Development Lead Officer (South) and the Area South Committee;
5. Noted that further reports will be brought to Council in order that decisions may be made in respect of draft proposals and final recommendations of the Review.

**Reason:** To commence a Community Governance Review of Barwick Parish Council to increase the size of the Parish Council from 10 to 12 Councillors and to change the name of Barwick Parish Council to Barwick & Stoford Parish Council.

*(Voting: Unanimous)*

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### **85. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 10)**

A question was raised, and the Leader responded to points of detail about his Portfolio Holder decision regarding the Affordable Housing Development Programme – West End Close, South Petherton.

There being no further discussion, the report of Executive Decisions was noted.

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### **86. Audit Committee (Agenda Item 11)**

Councillor Derek Yeomans, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the report of the Committee.

The Chief Executive provided clarity on some elements of the report including:

- Whilst SSDC no longer had a Procurement Manager, we were utilising procurement advice and support from Taunton Deane Borough Council.
- Data and Fraud – resources had not been taken away, but looking to deliver in a different way so different people may be involved.
- SSDC does have a Civil Contingencies Manager.

There being no further discussion, the report of the Audit Committee was noted.

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### **87. Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 12)**

Councillor Sue Steele, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, presented the report of the Committee.

The report of the Scrutiny Committee was noted.

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### **88. Motions (Agenda Item 13)**

There were no motions submitted by members.

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**89. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 14)**

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

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**90. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council would be held on 14 December 2017.

In response to a question raised, the Leader noted he would confirm as soon as possible if the meeting on 14 December would definitely go ahead.

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Chairman

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Date