

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 7 December 2017.**

(9.30 am - 12.31 pm)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

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

Also Present:

Mike Lewis	Sue Steele
Tony Lock	Colin Winder

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Commissioning)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Angela Watson	Legal Services Manager
Chris Cooper	Streetscene Manager
Mickey Green	Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership
David Clews	Spatial Planner
Helen Rutter	Communities Lead
David Norris	Development Manager
Neil Waddleton	Section 106 Monitoring Officer
Jo Wilkins	Acting Principal Spatial Planner
Caron Starkey	Strategic Lead for Transformation
Adam Burgan	Arts & Entertainment Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

79. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 2nd November 2017, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

80. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Angie Singleton.

81. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Derek Yeomans declared a personal interest in Agenda item 6: Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2018 – 2023, as the Chairman of the Somerset Waste Partnership.

82. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no Members of the public present.

83. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman advised that following the acquisition of two building in Yeovil under the new commercial strategy, he was pleased to report the Council had agreed a development deal with a Somerset developer to build and sell 29 houses over 18 months.

84. Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2018 - 2023 (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economic Development and Transformation introduced Mr Mickey Green as the new Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership. She noted that the report asked for confirmation of an early termination of the contract with Keir in order to implement the Recycle More project.

The Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership provided Members with a short power-point presentation on the future work of the partnership. He noted that:-

- The Waste Partnership had been in operation for 10 years and it was well known for its innovation on food waste collection, kerbside collections, anaerobic digestion and the Recycle More scheme.
- The Partnership would be persuading future generations to recycle by visiting 90 Primary Schools in the next year.
- Some of the current collection vehicles may not last until 2021 and so some collection vehicles may be brought in from elsewhere in the meantime.
- Strategic partnership meetings were being held with Keir to ensure valued staff were retained and one-to-one meetings with contractors interested in the new Recycle More contract were also taking place.
- Construction work was underway at Avonmouth on the new anaerobic digester.

In response to questions from Members, the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership advised that:-

- Works at Hinkley Point did not appear to be affecting the number of HGV drivers available.
- Although there were relatively few recycling suppliers who were innovative and interested in the Recycle More contract, there were sufficient and he was meeting with some of them in the following weeks.
- Although landfill was scheduled to cease at Dimmer in April 2020, the site was operated and controlled by Viridor.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed that Council Tax paid by the new households in the area would cover the increase in the cost of collection, together with the increase in the garden waste programme

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee noted that the Managing Director of the Somerset Waste Partnership had agreed to attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the new Recycle More contract with them.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. Approved the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan 2018-23, in particular the proposed approach to the procurement of a new collection contract as set out in the report.
- b. Noted that, in line with their delegated authority and in order to implement Recycle More as requested by partners, Somerset Waste Board have agreed with Kier to bring forward the expiry date of the current collection contract from September 2021 to 27 March 2020.
- c. Approved the projected budget for 2018/19 subject to the comments in section 7 of the SWP Business plan relating to the finalisation of the budget.

Reason: To confirm the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan 2018-2023 and note the implementation of the Recycle More contract.

85. **Community Infrastructure Levy - Guidance and Governance (Agenda Item 7)**

The Development Manager advised that although there were currently no receipts from CIL, the Council was required to produce a governance structure and a Regulation 123 list of infrastructure projects which may be funded by CIL in the future. Contributions towards education and affordable housing would continue to be funded through Section 106 Obligations. CIL had been set at £40 sqm for residential developments, however, self-build projects, affordable housing projects and the proposed urban extensions would not be subject to CIL but would be subject to Section 106 Obligations. A Local Development Scheme Board would manage the funds when money became available. Although there was interest from Parish Councils, if there was no development within their area then they would not receive any funding. Those Parishes with a Neighbourhood Plan in place would receive 25% of the CIL funds and those without one would receive 15%.

In response to questions from Members, the Development Manager advised that:-

- The Charging Authority would be the SSDC District Executive Committee with the support of the Audit Committee and Parish Council accounts.

- There would be an instalment policy for the payment of CIL in stages of the build. Enforcement would be stronger and site viability was not a consideration.
- The Regulation 123 list of infrastructure projects would be reviewed annually.
- If a village was embarking on a large infrastructure project, it could be possible for them to bid for more than the 15% CIL receipts towards it.
- SSDC were currently supporting the production of a number of Neighbourhood Plans for local communities.

It was noted that whilst 15% of CIL funding would go to the local Town or Parish Council, the remaining 85% could be spent elsewhere in the district and it was suggested that CIL funds could be allocated on an Area basis rather than a central pool to give communities some hope of the money being spent locally.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the contents of the report and endorsed the Community Infrastructure Levy governance structure suggested and agreed to the:-

- a. production of an annual CIL report to District Executive Committee that along with an updated Regulation 123 list identifying the key projects.
- b. production of an infrastructure Business Plan that will provide further detail on the individual infrastructure projects.
- c. delegation to the Local Development Scheme Board consideration of applications from services or external bodies for infrastructure funding against the Infrastructure Business Plan.

Reason: To note the detailed information provided on the Community Infrastructure Levy and to endorse the proposed governance structure.

86. **SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation (Agenda Item 8)**

The Chief Executive advised that currently, the Council only occupied 40% of its office space and public visitor footfall at council offices was reducing. Area working was a core part of locality working and the proposal was part of meeting the change in customers demand. The recommendation was to undertake a full feasibility study before any decision was taken in the future.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Executive advised that:-

- No decision had been made regarding future parking at Petters House and this would need to be addressed if the Council was minded to move its HQ.
- The visitor footfall numbers for Brympton Way offices was now available and would be circulated but they showed a 16% drop in visitors over the comparable first 10 months of the year.

- Property experts were commissioned to give SSDC a steer on its future HQ requirements and had taken a high level look at all the options and made a recommendation. To undertake a detailed feasibility of all the potential options would have taken longer and been a broader piece of work.

During discussion, the following comments were made:

- Recommendation D be amended to include “in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property Services and Leader of Council” and, to clarify that the full feasibility study would be funded through One Public Estate budget.
- Could funding set aside for the Superfast Broadband Extension Programme be used to improve Broadband within Area East to allow residents to access Council services on-line.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman assured Members that the decision on the Council’s future headquarters would not be rushed and the comments of the Scrutiny Committee would be taken into account. With this assurance Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the findings and recommendations in the David Lock Associates report – SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation November 2017 attached in Appendix 1.
- b. the principle that there is surplus office accommodation for council operational requirements at present and this will increase further post Transformation, and that the Council should therefore seek to rationalise operational property or seek alternative commercial or strategic use for it.
- c. task the Members Leadership & Development Project Group (Locality Working) to consider the report recommendations made in regard to Area Offices with input from Area Development Officers led by the Locality Manager and report back to District Executive in February 2018 with findings and recommendations in respect of office / building requirements to meet the new model of delivery.
- d. task the Commercial Property, Land and Development Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property Services and Leader of Council with undertaking a full feasibility study to be funded through One Public Estate budget, for the future council Head Quarters office to be located at Petters Way, and brought back to District Executive with findings and recommendations by February 2018.

Reason: To agree the principles and next steps in considering the future of area offices and head quarters offices for the council.

87. The Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (Agenda Item 9)

The Spatial Policy Planner advised that Local authorities were obliged to be proactive and engage constructively with Neighbourhood Plan groups. He confirmed that an independent examiner had looked at the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan and agreed that it met the criteria. Once confirmed, it would have to be taken into account when considering planning applications in that area. A referendum would be held in the New Year of all the electors for the area and if more than 50% agreed then SSDC would 'make' or adopt the Plan.

In response to questions from Members, the Spatial Policy Planner advised that:-

- The Neighbourhood Plan had to be in general compliance with the SSDC Local Plan and by 2020 Wincanton would be obliged to review their Neighbourhood Plan.
- The Neighbourhood Plan would have to take account of the modifications suggested by the independent examiner.
- The District Council were excluded from making any comments during the referendum period and it was for the Town Council to promote the plan.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Acting Principal Spatial Planner confirmed that they were currently supporting South Petherton, East Coker, Castle Cary and Ansford, Queen Camel, Ilminster and Martock to compile Neighbourhood Plans. Once the date of the referendum was set, SSDC could apply for £20,000 grant funding to cover the costs involved.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree that SSDC organise a referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan for Wincanton.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. agreed to the Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications to the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. agreed to the Council organising a referendum for local people on the Electoral Register as to whether they want South Somerset District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Wincanton to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area.
- c. delegated responsibility to the Director for Service Delivery in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to make any final minor text amendments to the Neighbourhood Plan, in agreement with Wincanton Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Reason: To note the progress made on the preparation of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan; to agree the independent Examiner's report and recommendations for Proposed Modifications; and to confirm the process for 'making' the plan following a favourable local referendum to be organised by the District Council.

88. Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter (Agenda Item 10)

The Director for Strategy and Commissioning confirmed that a new performance framework was needed and going forward, the Council would need to set measurable indicators as agreed in the Council Plan.

During discussion, it was noted that the Area Committee Chairmen were arranging to meet to discuss the number of planning appeals allowed against refusals to learn if there were any inconsistencies in decision making across the areas.

The Scrutiny Chairman thanked the Director for Strategy and Commissioning for attending their meeting to explain the performance monitoring report and future monitoring.

The Section 151 Officer noted that planning appeals carried financial risks for the Council and the Government were looking at appeal decisions which may affect New Homes Bonus funding in the future.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter report.

Reason: To note the Corporate Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report 2017/18: 2nd Quarter - July to September 2017.

89. Purchase of land adjoining Boden Street Car Park, Chard (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economic Development and Transformation advised that the land purchase would be very beneficial to the Chard Regeneration Scheme.

The Section 151 Officer advised that a position statement on the purchase would be included in the budget report due to be presented in January 2018. He confirmed that SSDC had permission to use capital receipts flexibly.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the land purchase as recommended.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive approved the purchase of the plot of land (adjoining Boden Street Car Park, Chard) at a cost of £51,000 as indicated in the report, to be funded from the useable capital receipts reserve.

Reason: To purchase an area of land that adjoins the Boden Street Car Park in Chard. The plot of land is of strategic value in the regeneration of Chard town centre and the local economy.

90. Yeovil Refresh - Delivery Arrangements (Agenda Item 12)

The Director for Service Delivery advised that the Yeovil Refresh document had been a key piece of work for the Strategic leadership team and the strategy document would be open for public consultation in the New Year. He said they were working towards a better relationship with Somerset County Council on travel and transport and the resources needed for this.

Councillor Peter Gubbins, as Portfolio Holder for Yeovil Town Centre Regeneration confirmed that Area South Committee would be asked to consider re-allocation of a proportion of the various reserves to support a programme of activities associated with the Yeovil Refresh and the Yeovil Refresh document would be published when this was agreed.

In response to questions from Members, the Chief Executive and the Director for Service Delivery confirmed that:-

- The Programme Manager appointment would be for 3 years.
- SSDC owned the freehold of Foundry House but a third party held a long lease on the building.
- The Yeovil Vision was a body whereas the Yeovil Refresh was a strategy document.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

- a. noted the progress so far of the Yeovil Refresh Project.
- b. approved the draft Refresh document for consultation in early 2018.
- c. agreed the allocation of £185,000 from the Infrastructure Reserve to fund the appointment of a Programme Manager to manage the delivery phases of regeneration projects identified. This post would be time-limited and sit outside the Transformation Process.
- d. noted that Area South Committee would be asked to consider re-allocation of a proportion of the various reserves identified in section 10 to support a programme of activities associated with the Yeovil Refresh.
- e. noted that commercially generated returns derived from capital receipts from development projects in Yeovil would be returned to the council's capital reserve. The reserve can be accessed to support further projects through a business case made to the District Executive Committee.

Reason: To update Members on the progress of the Yeovil Refresh project.

91. Westlands Revised Business Plan (Agenda Item 13)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture advised that now the complex had six months of trading figures it was prudent to update the Business Plan. She said the original Business Plan had assumed there would be seating for 900 in the main hall and 1,500 standing, however, there was only space for 870 seated and 1,200 standing and so this reduced capacity had impacted upon ticket sales. She noted that the internal loan from SSDC was being repaid through the ticket levy and over 14,000 tickets for various events had been purchased in the first six months of trading. She paid tribute to the staff who had been operating the complex during the first few challenging weeks and also to the many volunteers who helped to run events.

The Arts and Entertainment Manager confirmed their focus was on customers and continuing to deliver events and increase attendance. He said the previous Business Plan had assumed 83% attendance but at the moment there was 66% attendance at events. This was higher than the national average and would increase over time.

During a brief discussion Members were very supportive of the venue and were content to confirm the updated Business Plan for the Westland Complex.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive approved the updated Business Plan for Westlands, (confidential appendix – circulated under separate cover) and agreed to include the additional subsidy in years 2 and 3 of the financial forecasts, as summarised in paragraph 40, within the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, noting that the underlying subsidy was projected to reduce in subsequent years.

Reason: To update members on the revision of the Business Plan for Westlands Conference, Entertainment and Sports facility.

92. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 14)

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee noted that an update report on the progress with the scheme to develop and refurbish Yeovil Crematorium had been circulated to all Councillors by email and was not currently in the public domain. Councillor Peter Gubbins, Portfolio Holder for the Crematorium offered to present the report to the Scrutiny Committee in either January or February 2018.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Council Tax and Housing Benefit fraud report – moved to March 2018
 - South Somerset Local Plan Review, approval of Preferred Options for consultation – moved to October 2018

2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B with the following additional consultation:

- Proposed changes to the prudential framework of capital finance - DCLG Consultation

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

93. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 4th January 2018 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date