

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **South Somerset District Council** held on **Thursday 20 June 2019** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(7.30 pm - 9.15 pm)

### **Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Paul Maxwell (Chairman)  
Councillor Jenny Kenton (Vice-Chairman)

Jason Baker  
Robin Bastable  
Mike Best  
Dave Bulmer  
Tony Capozzoli  
Martin Carnell  
John Clark  
Nicola Clark  
Louise Clarke  
Nick Colbert  
Adam Dance  
Sarah Dyke  
Karl Gill  
David Gubbins  
Peter Gubbins

Mike Hewitson  
Henry Hobhouse  
Charlie Hull  
Kaysar Hussain  
Val Keitch  
Andy Kendall  
Tim Kerley  
Mike Lewis  
Tony Lock  
Kevin Messenger  
Graham Oakes  
Tricia O'Brien  
Sue Osborne  
Clare Paul  
Crispin Raikes

Paul Rowsell  
Dean Ruddle  
Gina Seaton  
Peter Seib  
Garry Shortland  
Alan Smith  
Jeny Snell  
Andy Soughton  
Mike Stanton  
Rob Stickland  
Lucy Trimnell  
Anthony Vaughan  
Linda Vijeh  
William Wallace  
Colin Winder

### **Officers:**

Alex Parmley  
Netta Meadows  
Clare Pestell  
Martin Woods  
Angela Watson  
Paul Fitzgerald  
Mike Cowdell  
Charlotte Jones  
Jo Gale

Chief Executive  
Director (Strategy & Support Services)  
Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)  
Director (Service Delivery)  
Monitoring Officer  
Section 151 Officer  
Somerset Waste Partnership  
Lead Specialist (People, Performance & Change)  
Scrutiny Specialist

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Bloomfield, Hayward Burt, Malcolm Cavill, Brian Hamilton, Pauline Lock, Mike Lock, Tiffany Osborne, Robin Pailthorpe, Wes Read, David Recardo, Gerard Tucker and Martin Wale.

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

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 21<sup>st</sup> March and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019, copies of which had been previously circulated, were approved as correct records of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

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**17. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest made by members.

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**18. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)**

A member of the public representing Extinction Rebellion (ER) referred to the climate change and ecological emergency declared by Council at their previous meeting and said they wished this to be a standing item on the agenda. She acknowledged that ER had been invited to participate in the green plan discussions later that month and she referred to the House of Commons plans announced that day to hold Citizens Assemblies to discuss the issues as she said it was important they hear the voice of the people.

Councillor Sarah Dyke, Portfolio Holder for Environment, said officers were working to develop the Environment Strategy and would be working with a range of stakeholders over the next two months to ensure it was robust and the timescales were achievable.

In response to a question, Councillor Dyke confirmed that engagement with Town and Parish Councils was part of the process as they held a great deal of local expertise.

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**19. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

The Chairman reminded Members that the meeting was audio recorded to ensure the accuracy of the minutes.

Councillor Sarah Dyke recorded her formal thanks to the team of staff at the Lufton Depot who provided an informative and well organised tour of the facilities for Members. She said the team were very hard working and a great deal of thought and effort had gone into the tour.

The Chairman thanked the Member Development Specialist for organising the recent Members Training Programme which he said was comprehensive and helpful to both new and returning Councillors. Members joined him in applauding the officer.

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**20. Chairman's Engagements (Agenda Item 6)**

The list of Chairman's engagements were noted.

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**21. Presentation from the Somerset Waste Partnership (Agenda Item 7)**

The Portfolio Holder for Environment introduced Mr Mike Cowdell of the Somerset Waste Partnership.

Mr Cowdell provided a comprehensive presentation of the current and future work of the Somerset Waste Partnership, which included information on:-

- They were the first county wide waste partnership in the Country
- They had a history of innovation including the collection and recycling of food waste, and, they now had an End Use Register to show where the waste went.
- They had achieved efficiency savings of over £1.5m per annum through rationalising services, £225k through a single client team creation and £942k in avoided future costs.
- Consistently over 90% of what was collect for recycling stayed in the UK (because of the high quality kerbside sort)
- They currently had a recycling rate of 52.4%
- They had been independently ranked as a carbon reduction 'high flyer' every year since 2012 (top 10%)
- They would be moving away from landfill as a method of disposal in April 2020 when the energy from waste plant went live at Avonmouth.
- There were 16 Recycling Centres across Somerset which accepted all plastic pots, tubs and trays not currently collected by the kerbside recycling
- The Recycle More scheme had been agreed by all partners and would bring environmental improvements and £2m+ cost savings. It was also hoped that it would change peoples behaviour towards waste as a resource.
- Subject to finalisation of funding, there would be a wider food waste campaign across Somerset and in schools in the Autumn to recycle food waste This would be to drive behaviour change ahead of the Recycle More scheme starting to be rolled out in June 2020.
- It was expected that Recycle More would increase food recycling by 20%, increase dry recycling by 30% and reduce the residual waste by 15%
- An additional 60 litre weighted bag would be provided to households for the additional plastic to be collected as the transition to 3 weekly residual waste collections was made.
- The new waste collection contract with Suez involved new technology which should help reduce the missed collection rate and there were strong penalties for contract failure.
- Through the Waste and Resources consultations, it was hoped that plastic producers would make their packaging easily recyclable in the future.

In response to questions from Members, Mr Cowdell responded:-

- Currently, the plastic bottles collected under the kerbside recycling were of a high grade and the reason why high value but mixed plastic was not collected was because existing contractors did not have the fleet or processing plant required to collect or process. Also mixed plastics was of a lower grade and consequently had a lower value and the pricing mechanism in the contract had been changed to account for this.
- All the Household Waste Recycling sites (HWRC's) were open all weekend (9.00am to 4.00pm) year round and until 6.00pm on weekdays in the summer. The HWRC sites were valued and there were no plans to close any of them.
- The Partnership did have a clinical waste collection service and the change to 3 weekly residual collection would not change the clinical waste service.
- The Partnership were involved in the consultation surrounding the deposit return scheme with DEFRA.
- The Waste Partnership were working with District Council Partners to ensure new developments consider waste and to better embed it into the planning process. They also offered guidance to developers and were forging links with big developers.

- The Recycle More trial at Wiveliscombe had been very successful but they had worked very hard on the education of residents prior to roll-out.
- The costs of transfer and treatment of residual waste at the Avonmouth site was marginally cheaper than landfill gate fee and landfill tax.
- Currently, the garden waste collection service was operated fortnightly by Kier and this would remain fortnightly under the new contract arrangements with Suez however new routes would likely be used.
- He would seek a response to Cllr Sue Osborne's question relating to residents concerns at Higher Clanville, Castle Cary about the safety of the access at Dimmer. Had these issues been resolved?
- The Partnership were not the first to be changing to 3 weekly residual waste collections and a lot of lessons had been learnt from other areas. The key was education, consultation and guidance.
- The Partnership were evaluating new technology to reduce their carbon footprint including the use of electric vehicles in the future as technology improved.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked Mr Cowdell for attending and providing an informative presentation and answering Members questions on the work of the Somerset Waste Partnership.

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## **22. SSSC Annual Achievements Report 2018-19 (Agenda Item 8)**

The Leader of Council introduced the report and drew Members attention to several highlights within the report including being shortlisted for two Municipal Journal National Awards. She also commended the volunteers who had provided 2,894 volunteer days the previous year.

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

- The Local Plan was shortly going out for consultation and the minimum number of new dwellings built per year and affordable homes built would be looked at as part of this process.
- Councillors should be promoting the Council's grants schemes in their monthly reports to their Town and Parish Councils.
- The Council's Transformation Programme was not complete and although there were issues in some service areas measures were being put in place to improve them.
- The £2.5m savings would be realised through the Transformation Programme.
- The registration of homeless people was an issue which she would be looking into as Portfolio Holder for Housing.

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Services confirmed that officers were in communication with the County Council and the Town and Parish Councils to identify land to plant significant numbers of trees. She said that SSSC had already planted trees on its own land where it could, for example, at Ham Hill Country Park.

Councillor Seib noted that the graphics of the report could be better represented in digital format which most people now used.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the 2018/19 End of Year Achievements report for publication.

**RESOLVED:** That Council agreed:

- a. To note the 2018/19 End of Year Achievements report at Appendix A.
- b. To approve the 2018/19 End of Year Achievements report for publication.

**Reason:** To note the summary of outcomes achieved against the Council Plan Annual Action Plan for the year April 2018 to March 2019 and agree to publish the 2018/19 End of Year Achievements report.

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### **23. Membership of Committees and Representation on External Organisations - Appointment of New Councillors (Agenda Item 9)**

The Leader of Council explained that she had been appointed as Chairman of the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives group and as such, was the Somerset representative on the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Board.

The Chairman then called for nominations for the remaining positions and the following nominations were proposed, seconded and agreed unopposed. It was therefore:

**RESOLVED:** In accordance with Section 16 (1) Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the duty therein to give effect to the wishes of the political group to which seats on any committee are allocated, the Council confirmed that:-

- a. Councillor Val Keitch be appointed to represent SSDC on the Heart of the South West Joint Committee
- b. Councillor Robin Bastable be appointed to represent SSDC on the South West Audit Partnership
- c. Councillor Linda Vjeh be appointed to represent SSDC on South West Provincial Employers
- d. Councillor Robin Bastable be appointed as the substitute representative on the Somerset Rivers Authority
- e. Councillor Michael Lewis be appointed to represent SSDC on the Parrett Drainage Board
- f. Councillor Tony Capozzoli be appointed to Vice-Chairman of the Regulation Committee
- g. Councillor Nicola Clark be appointed to Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee
- h. The Strategic Development Board membership will be the Leader of the Council, the 4 Area Chairmen, the relevant Portfolio Holders covering Economy, Homes, Environment, Infrastructure, Spatial

**Reason:** To confirm the final Committee appointments following the appointment of Councillors to various committees and working groups at Council on 21 May 2019.

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**24. Report of Executive Decisions (Agenda Item 10)**

The report of executive decisions was noted.

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**25. Motions (Agenda Item 11)**

The following Motion was submitted by Councillor Graham Oakes:

**Ban the use of netting at Development Sites**

South Somerset District Council has a long and established record of environmental protection and protecting wildlife. The Council is greatly concerned by the growing trend of developers in some areas using netting over trees and hedgerows at development sites to stop birds nesting and other wildlife using the hedges. This is wrong and runs against the best interests of supporting and enhancing local wildlife.

We call on all developers not to use netting in South Somerset.

Additionally, Council will urgently write to the relevant Government Ministers calling on the Government to ban the use of netting at all sites with planning consent or identified in Local or emerging Local Plans.

The Motion was seconded and Councillor Oakes made the following comments in support of his motion:-

- Both national developers and local Housing associations had recently been found to use netting at development sites
- Area East Committee had recently granted planning permission for a small development where the officer had proposed a planning condition to prevent the blocking of bird access using plastic bird netting as this could lead to entrapment from birds caught in netting
- A petition signed by 344,000 people had recently been submitted to the Government calling on them to discuss the issue

He concluded that his Motion called on the Council and the Government to protect wildlife and he asked that Members to support it.

During discussion, Members were very supportive of the Motion and made several suggestions to preserve or re-plant hedges and trees in future development sites.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment said that early engagement with developers and ecologists should mitigate the circumstances which required netting to be used at

development sites so that developers worked outside of the nesting season and trees and hedgerows were replaced.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were fully supportive of the Motion as proposed, and it was:-

**RESOLVED:** That Council agreed to:-

1. call on all developers not to use netting on trees and hedgerows at development sites in South Somerset.
2. urgently write to the relevant Government Ministers calling on the Government to ban the use of netting at all sites with planning consent or identified in Local or emerging Local Plans.

*(Resolution passed without dissent)*

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**26. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Agenda Item 12)**

There were no questions submitted under Procedure Rule 10.

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**27. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Full Council would take place on **Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2019** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil **commencing at 7.30 p.m.**

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Chairman

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Date