

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil on Thursday 5 March 2020.**

(9.30 am - 10.34 am)

Present:

Councillor Peter Seib (Chairman)

Jason Baker
Mike Best
John Clark
Adam Dance

Sarah Dyke
Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Tony Lock



Also Present:

Mike Lewis

Sue Osborne

Officers:

Clare Pestell
Martin Woods
Nicola Hix
Richard Ward
Ian Timms
Toffer Beattie
Cath Temple
Kirsty Larkins
Richard Birch
Angela Cox

Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Director (Service Delivery)
Interim Section 151 Officer
Monitoring Officer
Yeovil Refresh Project Manager
Specialist (Projects & Programmes)
Specialist (Performance)
Case Team Manager
Lead Specialist (Communications, Marketing & Media)
Specialist - Democratic Services

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

113. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of previous meeting held on 6 February 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

114. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Keitch and Alex Parmley, Chief Executive and Netta Meadows, Director.

115. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

116. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public.

117. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

118. Adoption of the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Agenda Item 6)

The Yeovil Refresh Project Manager introduced the report and advised that the endorsement of the Public Realm Design Guide would ensure it was part of the suite of documents in the Local Plan. It would be the foundation for future development schemes in the town centre including Glovers Walk and the cattle market site.

The Portfolio Holder for the Yeovil Vision noted that the Scrutiny Committee had regretted the report had not been presented to the Area South Committee in the first instance, however, he said that a workshop was planned with Area South Committee members the following week to discuss the Design Guide. He thanked the officers for their work in compiling the documents.

In response to questions from Members, the Yeovil Refresh Project Manager and the Director for Service Delivery advised:-

- The Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide took account of the sustainability principles of the Council's Environment Strategy and energy efficiency measures and tree planting together with working with Sustrans throughout the town.
- There would be the opportunity to add to the Design Guide at the Area South Committee Workshop the following week before presentation to Council.

It was noted that other towns had used empty shops as experience venues which could be considered for Yeovil.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members unanimously endorsed the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide and Shopfront Guide for adoption by Council.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. endorse the attached Public Realm Design Guide for adoption by Council. (Appendix A)
- b. endorse the attached Shopfront Guide for adoption by Council (Appendix B).

Reason: To recommend the Yeovil Public Realm Design Guide to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by Full Council. This adoption will create a SPD which supports relevant policies in the Council's adopted Local Plan (2006-2028) and completes Project P1 from the Yeovil Refresh.

119. SSDC Transformation Programme - Progress Report (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Protecting Core Services, including Transformation introduced the report and advised that it was an accurate snapshot of the programme. Following discussion of the report at Scrutiny Committee, where good questions had been raised, workshops would be held with Members to discuss the progress of the planning service and its work with Town and Parish Councils going forward. A planning workshop with Scrutiny Committee members was also proposed.

The Specialist (Projects & Programmes) advised that the report focussed on the technical developments and service redesign of the Transformation Programme. There was a steady improvement in the performance of the underlying technology in recent months. He said that a range of on-line services were available to the public and the Connect 360 customer relationship system would be rolled out later that month. There were now 8,639 active customer accounts and the registration and authentication process was much easier and the paper-free registration would bring both cost and environmental savings to the Council. He noted that the Service Delivery Recovery Programme for the planning service and revenues and benefits showed clear service improvement.

In response to questions from Members, the Specialist (Projects & Programmes) and Director for Service Delivery advised:-

- The Transformation Programme would be closing soon. Some of its capabilities were not delivered at its go-live date in January 2019 but they continued to be delivered since then and would continue beyond the end of the programme.
- The temporary measures brought in to assist some services the previous year had brought great improvements in the services through changing ways of working, using extra resources and outsourcing.
- Some areas of work were very complex and it there was not an easy technological fix for them.
- The Case Team Leader would be looking at how to improve the planning service and improving both technology and non-technology processes. This would include contact with Members.

The Case Team Manager confirmed that backlogs in the benefits service would be cleared within the first quarter of the year. Automated information from the DWP which was currently processed manually would shortly be automated so reducing the workload in the team.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to note the SSDC Transformation Programme – Progress Report.

Reason: To note the progress report prepared in accordance with the Transformation Programme Governance arrangements agreed by Full Council in April 2017 where it was agreed that the District Executive would receive quarterly updates on the progress of the council's Transformation Programme.

120. Corporate Performance Report 2020-21 Key Performance Indicators (Agenda Item 8)

The Specialist (Performance) advised that the report set out the proposed changes to the Council's key performance indicators. She noted that PCS 19 and 20 were new measures as requested by Members on staff retention and staff sickness and there would be an annual residents survey. The Healthy, Self-Reliant Communities section would include further indicators in the future.

During discussion, Members confirmed they were content with the performance indicators relating to the planning service but requested that the information submitted to the Government minister on the planning appeals lost as a percentage of all decisions be added to the District Executive Forward Plan so Members could see the cumulative picture and not a quarterly snapshot.

The Director for Service Deliver said that the discharge of planning conditions on a development site could be looked at during the proposed members workshop as mentioned in the previous report.

During discussion, Members made the following comments:-

- The percentage spend on local SME's had been revised in-year and there should be a strong ambition to buy locally.
- The key performance indicators for the Economy section should be looked at in light of the Economic Development Strategy.
- PCS 17 Commercial Property income yield – would prefer information on whether gross or net quarterly targets were met rather than an annual target.
- The carbon footprint reduction should be expressed in KW per tonne
- EN5 – residual waste to landfill – was this relevant as no further waste should be sent to landfill now. Change Landfill/ Incinerator.
- EN4 and 6 – SSDC had no influence on these measures so should they be included as they could be misleading to the public.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the Corporate Performance Report 2020-21 Key Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to note the Corporate Performance Report 2020-21 Key Performance Indicators.

Reason: To agree the proposed key performance indicators for the 2020-21 reporting period.

121. Business Rates Relief (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services advised that the three recommendations were backed by Government grants and so they were principally around administration of the proposals.

During a brief discussion, Members were fully supportive of the recommendations to support local businesses, particularly public houses, and unanimously agreed them.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. approve the use of the Councils local discretionary powers to increase Retail Rate Relief from one third to 50 percent from April 2020 for one year and to extend the relief to include cinemas and music venues with a Rateable Value of less than £51,000;
- b. approve the use of the Councils local discretionary powers to extend the Business Rate Relief Scheme for Local Newspapers, for an additional 5 years until March 2025;
- c. approve the use of the Councils local discretionary powers to re-introduce Pub relief of £1,000 to eligible pubs, with a Rateable Value of less than £100,000.

Reason: To approve the use of the Council's local discount powers to increase the Retail Rate Relief from one third to 50 percent in relation to Business Rates from 1 April 2020, approve the extension of the Local Newspaper relief for an additional 5 years until 31 March 2025, and, approve Pub relief in relation to Business Rates for 2020/2021.

122. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

The following additions and amendments to the Forward Plan were noted:

- Planning appeal decisions – Government submission
- Dualling of A303 – confirm date of report

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Planning appeal decisions – Government submission
 - Dualling of A303 – confirm date of report

2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

123. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 2 April 2020 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30am.

.....
Chairman

.....
Date