

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held as a **Virtual Meeting using Zoom meeting software on Thursday 5 November 2020.**

(9.30 - 10.15 am)

Present:

Chairman: Peter Seib

Jason Baker
Mike Best
John Clark
Adam Dance
Sarah Dyke

Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse (from 10.00am)
Tony Lock
Peter Seib



Also Present:

Robin Bastable
Brian Hamilton
Mike Lewis
Robin Pailthorpe
Crispin Raikes

Linda Vijeh
Gina Seaton
Andy Kendall
Clare Paul

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Service Delivery)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Martin Woods	Director (Place)
Nicola Hix	Director (Support Services)
Kirsty Larkins	Director (Strategy and Commissioning)
Richard Ward	Monitoring Officer
Vicki Dawson	Lead Specialist (Environmental Health)
David Crisfield	Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Joshua Bennett	Case Officer (Leisure & Recreation)
Angela Cox	Specialist (Democratic Services)
Michelle Mainwaring	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)
Becky Sanders	Case Officer (Strategy & Commissioning)

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

210. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 1st October 2020 were approved as correct records and would be signed by the Chairman.

211. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Keitch. Councillor Henry Hobhouse joined the meeting at 10.00am.

212. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

213. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

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

214. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

215. "Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset" - Somerset's Climate Emergency Strategy (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment introduced the report and advised that this was the County-wide strategy setting out the commitment of the 5 Somerset authorities to work together to tackle climate change. But it would also require the commitment of every resident, organisation and business in Somerset to achieve the ambition of carbon neutrality. There had been input from a great number of partners, the goals were ambitious and actions needed had been identified, however, it would be adapted as it moved forward over the next 5 to 10 years. There was a high level action plan which explained how to deliver the strategy. There were 17 technical appendices and a shorter summary document. She concluded this was the start of a commitment and she thanked the officers and the councillors of the task and finish group who had guided the strategy's development and she proposed the recommendation.

In response to questions, the Specialist for Strategic Planning advised:-

- In the equality impact statement where a negative equality impact had been identified then it would be mitigated and addressed.
- This was one of a number of complementary strategies, including the South Somerset Environment Strategy

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said that they wished to congratulate the officers and Portfolio Holders across the county for the work they put into the strategy document. He said they acknowledged that it would evolve over time. He said they had discussed changing peoples behaviour through education and the need to maintain the County's rights of way as more people were encouraged to walk.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Representations should be made to the utility companies to align their timetables to achieve carbon-neutrality to avoid voltage limitations which prevented pv electricity generated from local households being distributed.
- The subject of climate change and environment was so broad that it was almost impossible to capture every element, but the report did well in its breadth and

completeness. The thoroughness and detail was also commendable and it had been a multi-council project which meant it would be implemented.

- Efforts should not be duplicated as there were other initiatives like the cycling to school which should be tied in with this.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were pleased to recommend that Full Council agree to adopt The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy – “Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset”.

RESOLVED: That District Executive recommend that Full Council agree to adopt The Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy – “Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset”

Reason: To confirm the Somerset Climate Emergency Strategy - “Towards a Climate Resilient Somerset” and to agree its progress to Full Council for adoption.

216. Corporate Performance Report 2020-21: 2nd Quarter (Agenda Item 7)

The Director for Strategy and Commissioning introduced the report and said that Covid-19 had a huge impact on the Council services with additional demands in some areas and the need to set up new services to respond to the pandemic. But a good standard of performance had been maintained and although some areas were below performance, given the additional demand the Council was still performing well. This reflected the hard work of staff across the Council.

In response to questions raised by the Scrutiny Committee, the Director for Strategy and Commissioning advised:-

- The planning PCS11 indicator (time taken to determine planning applications) was a national figure and the methodology for calculating this was set by the Government.
- If a time extension to determine an application was agreed with the applicant, and, the application was then determined within that period, then it was classed as being determined within the 13 week period.
- The extension of time to determine a planning application varied between the different type of applications and information on an average of time extensions would be shared with Members.
- The Lead Specialist had presented a report to District Executive on the number of planning appeals and the Planning Reimagined Workshops had looked to address this so that less applications were appealed whilst balancing this with the democratic process.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- Clarification had been sought at Scrutiny Committee whether the applicants or the Council had requested the time extension on planning applications and this would be included in the next years reporting cycle.
- Information had been sought on the number of planning applications approved but not yet built, particularly those which had expired their 3 years permission.

- All Councillors were members of the Area Committees who determined planning applications and should make their decisions in line with the Council's planning policies. The recommendations from the Planning Reimagined Workshops should address the issues raised by the Scrutiny Committee.
- Members were pleased to receive the bulletin advising them that the Council now had a 5 year housing land supply.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the Corporate Performance Report 2020-21: 2nd Quarter.

Reason: To note the current position of the Council's agreed key performance indicators covering the period from July to September 2020 (Q2).

217. 2020/21 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2020 (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and noted the recommendation to transfer funding agreed for the Ninesprings extension project to the John O'Donnell Pavilion Improvements Project at Yeovil Recreation Centre (YRC), as detailed in paragraphs 12 – 16.

In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, the Director for Support Services advised:-

- The £9m referred to in Appendix A was in relation to spend on commercial investments and a detailed break-down of this would be provided in the next quarterly investment asset report.
- The Westlands improvement works was the capital bid agreed as part of the 2020/21 budget setting report for boiler replacement and general upgrade work.
- The affordable housing project at Chard Working Mens Club was a Stonewater Housing development and if they were unable to rectify the issue and the project did not go ahead then the funding would be returned to the affordable housing reserve.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the content of the report;
- b. approve the revised Capital Programme spend profile as detailed in paragraph 7, Table 1;
- c. approve the transfer of the £100k agreed for the Ninesprings extension project to the John O'Donnell Pavilion Improvements Project at Yeovil Recreation Centre (YRC), detailed in paragraphs 12 – 16;

- d. approve the projects listed on Appendix B remain in the capital programme.

Reason: To note the in-year projection in 2020/21 of the forecast spending (“outturn”) against the Council’s approved Capital Programme Budget, and to agree projected variations against individual projects and the Programme as a whole.

218. 2020/21 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2020 (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services advised that this was the mid-year position and there were some changes from the budget predictions. The report was written prior to the second shut-down period and the predictions would need to be checked again. Some of the figures also overlapped with MHCLG submissions and paragraph 8 of the report explained this. He said the finance team were currently administering the new grants to organisations following the second shut-down period.

The Director for Support Services advised that since the report was written, a further £453,983 in Government COVID funding had been received taking the total received to £2.458m. She confirmed that she would clarify by email a question relating to the purpose of the community safety reserve funding.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Director for Strategy and Commissioning advised that the comfort telephone calls made by the Careline service would continue for the stepping stone customers for the initial 6 weeks as they left hospital. Customers could also pay for additional comfort calls.

The Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services noted that commercial investments would be affected by the Covid-19 situation but not to the extent previously thought through good management of the portfolio by officers. He said there was a reserve for such events of over £6m.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the 2020/21 forecast financial position of the Council;
- b. note the predicted variance to approved Directorate Budgets as detailed in paragraphs 10 and 12;
- c. note the budget virements made under delegated authority as detailed in Appendix B;
- d. approve the budget virements included in paragraph 16, Table 4;
- e. approve a budget allocation of up to £420k towards local

government change, to be held in an earmarked reserve;

- f. note the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 30 Table 6, the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C, and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in Appendix D.

Reason: To note the current projection of the forecast spending and income (“outturn”) against the Council’s approved Revenue Budget for the financial year, and to agree the projected variations against budget.

219. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

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

- Proposals from the Planning Re-imagined Workshops – January 2021

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - Proposals from the Planning Re-imagined Workshops – January 2021
2. noted the consultation received from the Committee for Standards in Public Life – Standards Matter 2

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

220. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 3rd December 2020 as a virtual meeting using Zoom meeting software commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date