

MEETING: DE.12: 11:12
DATE 05.04.12

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held on **Thursday 5th April 2012** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(9.30 a.m. – 12.20 p.m.)

Present:

Members: Ric Pallister (in the Chair)

Tim Carroll
Tony Fife
Henry Hobhouse
Michael Lewis

Patrick Palmer
Jo Roundell Greene
Sylvia Seal
Angie Singleton (to 12.15pm)

Also Present:

Peter Gubbins
Tony Lock
Nigel Mermagen

David Norris
Sue Steele
Colin Winder

Mrs Lesley Boucher, SSDC representative on the Yeovil District Hospital Board of Governors

Officers:

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| Mark Williams | Chief Executive |
| Vega Sturgess | Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) |
| Ian Clarke | Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) |
| Donna Parham | Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) |
| Martin Woods | Assistant Director (Economy) |
| Steve Joel | Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) |
| Laurence Willis | Assistant Director (Environment) |
| Jo Morgan | Community Cohesion Officer |
| Garry Green | Engineering and Property Services Manager |
| Emily McGuinness | Scrutiny Manager |
| Angela Cox | Democratic Services Manager |

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

157. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

It was noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2012 had been confirmed at the Special District Executive meeting held on 26th March 2012.

158. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Peter Seib.

159. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

160. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

Mr Murray Shepstone spoke regarding Agenda item 8 - Public Consultation on Proposed Car Park Charges and introduction of Evening and Sunday Charging in selected car parks in Yeovil. He asked that the Council abandon its plans to impose Sunday and evening car park charges in Yeovil as he felt it would have a detrimental effect on the town. He noted that it had taken less than 6 hours to collect almost 1,500 signatures on a petition opposing the charges in Yeovil the previous week. He said that during the current recession, when many people were facing pay freezes or pay reductions, it was unfair to levy increased charges on them. It could also have a detrimental effect upon the buoyant evening economy in Yeovil. He further noted that to charge on Sundays could impede or discourage people from attending Church services within the town.

161. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

162. Report from Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust (Agenda Item 6)

Mrs Lesley Boucher, SSDC representative on the Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust, introduced the report to Members. She noted that comments had been raised at recent SSDC Core Strategy meetings to the effect that the Yeovil District Hospital would not be able to cope with the additional people living in the town if the urban extension was to be agreed, but she said that the extension to the hospital at the new Cheverton site would be developed within the next 18 months and would greatly improve patient care.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Boucher confirmed that:-

- The new Chief Executive of the hospital would be Mr Paul Mears who was currently working at South Devon Health Care NHS Trust. He was a very experienced officer and would be an excellent replacement for the previous Chief Executive, Mr Gavin Boyle.
- She would be pleased to accept questions or comments from Councillors and put them forward at the Hospital Board of Governors Meetings and this would be a two way communication of information.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked Mrs Boucher for attending and providing a comprehensive report. Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive noted the report from the Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust.

Reason: To receive an update report from the SSDC representative of the Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust.

(Sylvia Seal, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture)
(sylvia.seal@southsomerset.gov.uk)

163. Adoption of Equality Objectives (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development advised that the Equality Objectives were a requirement under the Equality Act 2010. She said they had been examined by both the Equalities Steering Group and the Scrutiny Committee and they would be embedded into all aspects of Council work. New staff and Council Contractors would also be made aware of them.

The Scrutiny Chairman said the Committee commended the action plan within the report as easy to understand and with SMART objectives.

Members were content to endorse the Equality Objectives 2012 – 2016, as presented and recommended that they be adopted by Council.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive endorsed the Equality Objectives 2012 – 2016, as presented and recommended that they be adopted by Council.

Reason: To comply with the requirement of the Public Sector Equality Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

*(Jo Morgan, Community Cohesion Officer – 01935 462297)
(jo.morgan@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

164. Public Consultation on Proposed Car Park Charges and introduction of Evening and Sunday Charging in selected car parks in Yeovil (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman introduced the report to Members. He explained that although the District Executive had agreed to increase car parking charges at their meeting in February 2012, they did not have the authority to impose evening charges. This had subsequently been agreed at Council in February 2012 subject to a statutory 4 weeks of public consultation.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning advised that the Car Park Strategy, which had been agreed in 2007, had introduced increased car parking charges, however, the Council had not increased them every year. He noted that the majority of the consultation responses were opposed to the proposed imposition of evening and Sunday charging.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported that they accepted the principle of establishing evening and weekend car parking charges in Yeovil, but were of the opinion that it should be a pilot monitored for 12 months and that there should be a nominal flat rate fee for evening and weekend parking of up to £1 across the recommended car parks in Yeovil. They also requested that a report be produced after 12 months to assess the actual income against projected budgets and the social and economic impact on the town.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Whilst some Members felt they could not support evening or Sunday car park charges in Yeovil, others felt that it was reasonable, taking into account charges in other towns and cities. It was particularly noted that some town centre housing development had been allowed without any dedicated car parking on the basis that they could park overnight free of charge in council owned car parks and it would be particularly unfair to these residents.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning proposed that the decision to implement evening and Sunday charging in certain car parks within Yeovil be deferred for 2012/13, pending a review of the Car Park Strategy. The cost to the Council would be in the region of £73,000, however, due to the mild winter weather, funds allocated for gritting SSDC owned car parks had not been fully used and £30,000 was remaining. This would be used to offset the £73,000 with the remaining £43,000 being made up from balances. This proposal was seconded.

It was also proposed that a scoping report on the revised Car Park Strategy be presented to the District Executive in June 2012. With the amendments proposed Members were content to agree the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. noted the updated findings of the consultation process;
2. agreed to the proposed daily increase to the car parking and season ticket charges as presented to the District Executive meeting on the 2nd February 2012 taking into account the outcome of the consultation process;
3. deferred the implementation of evening and Sunday charging in certain car parks in Yeovil pending a review of the council's Car Parking Strategy later in the year.

Reason: To confirm the scale and level of the proposed increase to car park charges and to defer the introduction of evening and Sunday charging in selected car parks in Yeovil pending a review of the council's Car Parking Strategy later in the year.

*(Garry Green, Engineering & Property Services Manager – 01935 462066)
(garry.green@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

165. Appointment of Land Use and Valuation Advisor Post (Agenda Item 9)

The Chairman advised that Harrogate Borough Council had benefitted greatly by employing their own Valuation Adviser, who had been accepted by the development community as providing sound valuation advice. He said there was a need for someone with expert valuations skills within the council, particularly with the impending introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and he was confident the post would prove its value within the two years.

In response to questions, the Chairman confirmed that:-

- He expected to appoint a professionally qualified valuer
- Once in post, he would expect the individual to train other members of staff
- The impartiality of the valuations given would be expected of a professional valuation officer.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive approved the appointment of a Land Use and Valuation Advisor post on a temporary 2 year basis and that the maximum costs if required of £106,586 are met from the New Homes Bonus Reserve.

Reason: To endorse the appointment of an in Land Use and Valuation Advisor post as a resource to help achieve the delivery of affordable homes, employment sites, regeneration projects, managing its assets, and to assess project viability.

*(David Julian, Economic Development Manager – 01935 462279)
(david.julian@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

166. Draft Recommendations on the new Electoral Arrangements for Somerset (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning reminded Members that the request for the review had been made by Somerset County Council, who wished to reduce the number of County Councillors from 58 to 55. As it had been deemed imperative to retain 4 County Councillors to represent all of West Somerset, this had meant that Mendip, Taunton Deane and South Somerset would each lose a County Councillor. He noted that currently, the County and District Council divisions and wards were co-terminus, with one small exception in Yeovil Without but the new proposals from the Boundary Commission would mean that many rural District Councillors would have to liaise with 2 or 3 County Councillors. Maps of the proposed changes were circulated. He proposed that representations be made to the Boundary Commission on the following points:-

- Loss of co-terminosity within Wards and Divisions and the associated working difficulties this could create between District and County Councillors
- Opposition to the proposed anomaly of two Member Wards which had never happened before
- The representations of Parish Councils to be included in the final response.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said that members had expressed their dissatisfaction with the proposed loss of ward / division co-terminosity, with many ward members having to liaise with more than one County Division member.

During discussion, Members spoke of several anomalies and problems which the proposals would pose to the District Council, for both residents, Parish Councils and Councillors. It was noted that the proposals divided some parishes and would create electoral confusion.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree that the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Spatial Planning make representations to the Boundary Commission, to include the following points:-

- Loss of co-terminosity within Wards and Divisions and the associated working difficulties this could create between District and County Councillors.
- Opposition to the proposed anomaly of two Member Wards as not in the interests of democracy.
- Breaking down of parish boundaries.
- Opposition to the naming of certain Divisions within Yeovil.
- The representations of Parish Councils to be included in the final response.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive considered the draft recommendations published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and agreed that representations be made to the Commission through the Leader of Council.

Reason: To seek Members views on the draft recommendations published by the Local Government Boundary Commission setting out proposed new electoral arrangements for Somerset County Council.

(Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services) – 01935 462184)
(ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk)

167. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 11)

The following additions to the Forward Plan were noted:

- Affordable Housing Development Plan update (Aug 2012)
- Scoping report for Car Park Strategy (June 2012)
- Wincanton Community Sports Centre Restructuring of Contractual and Funding Arrangements (June 2012)

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A of the agenda report with the following additions:-
 - Affordable Housing Development Plan update (Aug 2012)
 - Scoping report for Car Park Strategy (June 2012)
 - Wincanton Community Sports Centre Restructuring of Contractual and Funding Arrangements (June 2012)
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

(Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services) – 01935 462184)
(ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk)

168. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 3rd May 2012 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

(Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services) – 01935 462184)
(ian.clarke@southsomerset.gov.uk)

169. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED: That the following items be considered in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

170. Resource Centre Options Appraisal (Agenda Item 13) (Confidential)

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed the amended recommendations of the report.

Reason: To enable the Community Resource Centre to continue at a reduced cost to the Council

*(Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) – 01935 462278)
(steve.joel@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

171. Wincanton Community Sports Centre Restructuring of Contractual and Funding Arrangements (Agenda Item 15) (Confidential)

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed the recommendations of the report.

Reason: To seek approval for changes to be made to the current contractual and funding arrangements at Wincanton Community Sports Centre.

*(Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) – 01935 462278)
(steve.joel@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

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Chairman

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Date