

MEETING: DE.03: 12:13
DATE 02.08.12

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held on **Thursday 2nd August 2012** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

(9.30 a.m. – 11.55 a.m.)

Present:

Members: Ric Pallister (in the Chair)

Tony Fife
Henry Hobhouse
Michael Lewis

Patrick Palmer
Sylvia Seal
Angie Singleton

Also Present:

Carol Goodall
Nigel Mermagen

Sue Steele
Martin Wale

Mrs Lesley Boucher, SSDC representative on the Yeovil District Hospital Board of Governors
Karen Collins, Somerset Community Foundation

Officers:

Vega Sturgess	Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus)
Rina Singh	Strategic Director (Place and Performance)
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Helen Rutter	Assistant Director (Communities)
David Julian	Economic Development Manager
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

28. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

29. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Carroll, Jo Roundell Greene and Peter Seib and Mark Williams, Chief Executive.

30. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

31. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public present.

32. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman advised that the Chief Executive would return to work on 3rd September.

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

Mrs Lesley Boucher, SSDC representative on the Yeovil District Hospital Foundation Trust, introduced the report to Members and invited questions.

Mrs Boucher confirmed that:-

- In future, supplementary information would be circulated by e-mail.
- The sources of income for the Yeovil NHS Trust would be circulated separately.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture thanked Mrs Boucher for attending and providing a comprehensive and valuable 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)

34. Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) Local Giving Match Challenge Campaign (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report to the Committee. She said the funding requested would be a one-off grant to set off the Local Giving Campaign in Somerset.

Karen Collins of the Somerset Community Foundation advised that:-

- People would be able to donate money on-line through the localgiving.com website.
- There were currently 109 charitable groups on the website.
- The Government would match fund every £10 donated during September and any regular donations set up would be match funded for the first three months.
- Fundraising workshops would be held to help charities raise funds and look at alternative ways to sustainably fund themselves in the future.
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In response to questions from Members it was confirmed that:-

- Monitoring of the scheme would take place and a full evaluation report would be presented to the Corporate Grants Committee in October 2012.
 - SSDC were the first Council in Somerset to support the project.
 - Any funding and donations received would be used within the local SSDC area.
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At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree the funding for the project.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive supported the work of Somerset Community Foundation and agreed to £10,000 once-off funding from the District Executive Contingency Fund to support the forthcoming Local Giving Campaign in South Somerset.

Reason: To agree to work with and support the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) to boost awareness and uptake of the forthcoming Local Giving Campaign in South Somerset.

*(Alice Knight, Third Sector and Partnerships Manager – 01963 435061)
(alice.knight@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

35. The Localism Act – Community Right to Challenge (Agenda Item 8)

The Leader of the Council advised that in agreeing the recommendations of the report, SSDC would accept an open tender process for any Community Right to Challenge applications. He also noted that communities wishing to bid to operate SSDC services may also have to compete with private companies.

The Assistant Director (Communities) advised that Members may wish to consider a longer period for pre-expression of interest discussions, as detailed in the table on page 16 of the Agenda, and she recommended 12 rather than the suggested 8 weeks.

The Scrutiny Chairman reported that the comments from the Scrutiny Committee were:-

- 30 days was a long time to acknowledge and log an application.
- The applicant should be informed of the Council's decision regarding their expression of interest before it was made public.
- A list of postcodes could be added to the guidance notes to assist officers in identifying the area of the request.
- The guidance notes should include a paragraph explaining that they were also available in different formats and languages.
- Section 7 of the guidance notes on page 29 required further explanation.

The Assistant Director (Communities) agreed to take up these points in the final document.

During discussion, varying views were expressed. Some Members felt the process could be hugely bureaucratic whilst others felt their communities would embrace it as an opportunity to run a service locally. It was also questioned whether it was possible to charge for the procurement service. The Strategic Director (Place and Performance) cautioned that the process was intended to be competitive and to operate a service at a reduced cost to local residents.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree the recommendations, subject to the comments of the Scrutiny Committee, and, the proposed 12 weeks for the pre-expression of interest discussions.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed the process and decision making route for responding to the Community Right to Challenge, as set out in the Appendix A (as amended) to the report.

Reason: To set out the proposed SSDC approach to responding to the Community Right to Challenge under the Localism Act 2011.

*(Helen Rutter, Assistant Director (Communities) – 01935 462060)
(helen.rutter@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

36. Affordable Housing Development Programme (Agenda Item 9)

The Leader advised that the supply of affordable housing was now slowing down. Yarlington Homes were coming towards the end of their housing replacement programme and the way forward may now be through 'bought not built' properties in the future. He also advised that any re-negotiation of Section 106 agreements for housing development sites could affect the future affordable housing agreed at the sites.

The Corporate Strategic Housing Manager noted that the report contained both the affordable properties built in the last 4 years and those projected to be built in the forthcoming year. He said that although affordable housing had been negotiated as part of many housing schemes, it did not necessarily mean they would be built in the near future. He reported that there were 4 rural exception sites currently under construction or in negotiation, two of which had received £1.3m funding from the Homes and Communities Association.

Members thanked the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager for providing a comprehensive report and were content to agree the recommendations.

- RESOLVED:** That District Executive:
1. note the outturn position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2011/12;
 2. confirm the re-allocation of £165,000 from the Yarlington scheme at Sparkford to increase the rural exception scheme fund;
 3. agreed an additional allocation of £20,000 for the Raglan scheme at East Street, Chard.

Reason: To update Members on the final position of the Affordable Housing Development Programme for 2011/12 and make minor amends to the allocations within the existing budget.

*(Colin McDonald, Corporate Strategic Housing Manager – 01935 462133)
(colin.mcdonald@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

37. SSDC Heritage Service – The way forward (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture drew Members attention to the reduced cost of providing the heritage service from £173,300 in 2008 to £76,600 in 2012. She asked that Members agree the recommendation to continue the service at a cost of £56,300 in future.

The Economic Development Manager provided Members with a comprehensive overview of the heritage service past history and recent achievements. He noted the main problems associated with converting the service to a charitable trust and he asked Members to agree the recommendation to continue the service at a reduced cost for the present time.

Joseph, a volunteer at the CHAC site, spoke briefly about the work and the visitors to the centre.

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

- Visits to the CHAC site were by telephone appointment
- No entrance fee was currently charged however this would change in the next year.
- Positive marketing to encourage more visitors would be starting shortly.

During discussion, Members expressed their disappointment that charitable status was not possible at the current time and were content to agree to continue the service on a reduced budget as recommended.

- RESOLVED:** That the District Executive:
1. noted the difficulties likely to be encountered if SSDC were to set up a Charitable Trust for SSDCs Heritage Collection at this time.
 2. noted that following exploration of Trust Status for the Heritage Service as authorised by District Executive Committee in November 2011, members agreed to SSDC continuing to manage the current service at a reduced funding level as described in the report.

Reason: To agree an option for the future delivery of the Council's Heritage Service.

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

38. Village Hall Waste Collections (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change advised that in future, unless village halls only opened “wholly or mainly” for public meetings, then a charge would have to be made to collect their waste. He noted that the report gave a number of options for the introduction of the charges and that although option 3 was recommended, he was inclined towards option 2 with the addition of allowing individual village halls to apply for a transitional grant to help with the costs in the first year.

The Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) advised that the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 had altered the definition of household and commercial waste for village halls, clubs, societies and churches. Public meeting waste was defined as household waste and collection authorities had a duty to collect this waste and recover the cost of collection. However, waste from premises used for business, sport, recreation, clubs, societies and social events was classified as commercial waste. Although the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) could collect commercial waste at commercial rates, village halls had the option to use a private commercial company if they preferred.

During discussion, Members agreed the option 2 was the preferred option with the addition of allowing individual village halls to apply for a transitional grant to help with the costs in the first year if genuine hardship could be demonstrated. The application for the transitional grants would be made to the Area Development teams. Members also asked

that the costs of collection of waste from village halls be made clear to the hall owners in future.

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

- RESOLVED:** That the District Executive:-
1. agreed to request that the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) offer a basic waste and recycling service to all village halls and community meeting places in South Somerset;
 2. agreed to request that the SWP instruct the contractor to recover the cost of this collection directly from the relevant community and village halls from October 2012;
 3. agreed that individual community and village halls apply to the Area Development Teams for financial transitional assistance of up to £45 per village hall for one year only on proven hardship grounds, to provide transition support and allow time to develop new arrangements. The funding to be found from savings in the waste formula and a further £2,000 from the District Executive Contingency Fund.

Reason: To agree a consistent waste and recycling service be offered to community and village halls across South Somerset.

*(Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) – 01935 462200)
(vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

39. The Green Deal (Agenda Item 12)

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change advised that a cross-party group of Members and officers would be set up to look at the implications of the Green Deal for SSDC. He said that funding had been sought to enable infra-red photographs to be taken of every property in South Somerset to demonstrate to householders where their major heat losses were. He explained how the Green Deal would work and its possible drawbacks for residents and he said it was envisaged that SSDC may introduce a no-cost scheme which aimed to help local residents.

Following a brief discussion, the Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change confirmed that he would be shortly issuing a press release on the discontinuation of the Warmhomes loft insulation scheme in October 2012.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree the Green Deal action plan as attached at Appendix One.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed the Green Deal action plan as attached at Appendix One to the Agenda report.

Reason: To agree a Green Deal action plan for South Somerset to help households to reduce their energy bills

*(Vega Sturgess, Strategic Director (Operations and Customer Focus) – 01935 462200)
(vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

40. 2012/13 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 30th June 2012 (Agenda Item 13)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that some income generating services including car parking charges and development control application fees were experiencing a drop in income due to the ongoing recession.

In response to questions from Members, she confirmed that the business rates discretionary relief scheme and all business rate discounts would be reviewed later in the year as the current scheme was overspent. Members requested that the Yeovil Vision and the Market Town Investment Group should be involved in the business rate relief review.

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

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

- a. noted the current 2012/13 financial position of the Council;
- b. noted the reasons for variations to the previously approved budgets as detailed in paragraphs 3.3 and that Management Board are taking steps to reduce the anticipated overspend;
- c. noted the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 7.1 and the position of the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in Appendix D;
- d. noted the virements made under delegated authority as detailed in Appendix B;

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the revenue budgets of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved budgets for the period 1st April to 30th June 2012.

*(Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) – 01935 462225)
(donna.parham@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

41. 2012/13 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 30th June 2012 (Agenda Item 14)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) introduced the report to Members. In response to a question, she confirmed that the Section 106 money detailed in the report were the actual funds held by SSDC and did not include any negotiated or expected funding in the future.

Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

- a. approved the revised capital programme spend as detailed in paragraph 6;
- b. approved the return of £26,000 to capital balances as detailed in

paragraph 8;

- c. noted the progress of individual capital schemes as detailed in Appendix A;
- d. noted the slippage in the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 8;
- e. noted the total land disposals to registered social landlords as detailed in Appendix B;
- f. noted the balance of S106 deposits by developers held in a reserve as detailed in Appendix C;
- g. noted the current position with regard to funds held by the Wessex Home Improvement Loans as detailed in paragraph 11.

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the capital programme of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved budgets for the period 1st April to 30th June 2012.

*(Donna Parham, Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) – 01935 462225)
(donna.parham@southsomerset.gov.uk)*

42. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 15)

The following additions to the Forward Plan were noted:

- Safer Somerset Group - September 2012

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A with the following amendment:-
 - Safer Somerset Group – September 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)*

43. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 16)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 6th September 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)*

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Chairman