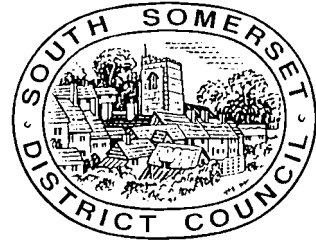


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



**South Somerset
District Council**

Making a difference where it counts

Thursday 21st April 2016

7.30 pm

**Council Chamber
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



All members of Council are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager**, on (01935) 462148

This Agenda was issued on Wednesday 13 April 2016.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



South Somerset District Council Membership

Chairman: Mike Best
Vice-chairman: Tony Capozzoli

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Clare Aparicio Paul | Tim Inglefield | David Recardo |
| Jason Baker | Val Keitch | Jo Roundell Greene |
| Cathy Bakewell | Andy Kendall | Dean Ruddle |
| Marcus Barrett | Jenny Kenton | Sylvia Seal |
| Mike Beech | Mike Lewis | Gina Seaton |
| Neil Bloomfield | Sarah Lindsay | Peter Seib |
| Amanda Broom | Mike Lock | Garry Shortland |
| Dave Bulmer | Tony Lock | Angie Singleton |
| John Clark | Paul Maxwell | Alan Smith |
| Nick Colbert | Sam McAllister | Sue Steele |
| Adam Dance | Graham Middleton | Rob Stickland |
| Gye Dibben | David Norris | Andrew Turpin |
| Sarah Dyke-Bracher | Graham Oakes | Linda Vijeh |
| John Field | Sue Osborne | Martin Wale |
| Nigel Gage | Tiffany Osborne | William Wallace |
| Carol Goodall | Stephen Page | Nick Weeks |
| Anna Groskop | Ric Pallister | Colin Winder |
| Peter Gubbins | Shane Pledger | Derek Yeomans |
| Henry Hobhouse | Crispin Raikes | |
| Kaysar Hussain | Wes Read | |

Information for the Public

The meetings of the full Council, comprising all 60 members of South Somerset District Council, are held at least 6 times a year. The full Council approves the Council's budget and the major policies which comprise the Council's policy framework. Other decisions which the full Council has to take include appointing the Leader of the Council, members of the District Executive, other Council Committees and approving the Council's Consultation (which details how the Council works including the scheme allocating decisions and Council functions to committees and officers).

Members of the Public are able to:-

- attend meetings of the Council and its committees such as Area Committees, District Executive, except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Area Committees, District Executive and Council meetings;
- see reports and background papers, and any record of decisions made by the Council and Executive;
- find out, from the Executive Forward Plan, what major decisions are to be decided by the District Executive.

Meetings of the Council are scheduled to be held monthly at 7.30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month in the Council Offices, Brympton Way although some dates are only reserve dates and may not be needed.

The agenda, minutes and the timetable for council meetings are published on the Council's website – www.southsomerset.gov.uk/councillors-and-democracy/meetings-and-decisions

The Council's Constitution is also on the web site and available for inspection in Council offices.

The Council's corporate aims which guide the work of the Council are set out below.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

South Somerset District Council – Council Aims

Our key areas of focus are: (all equal)

- Jobs – a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- Environment – an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- Homes – decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- Health & Communities – communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other

Information for Councillors – Words of Encouragement prior to the meeting

For those Members wishing to participate, there will be time for reflection and words of encouragement from 7.20pm in the Council Chamber. There will be a very short interval between the conclusion of the time of reflection and the start of the meeting to enable those Members and Officers who do not wish to take part to enter the Council Chamber and join the meeting.

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South Somerset District Council

Thursday 21 April 2016

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To approve and sign the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday, 17th March 2016.

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9.

Members are reminded that they need to declare the fact that they are also a member of a County, Town or Parish Council as a Personal Interest. As a result of the change made to the Code of Conduct by this Council at its meeting on 15th May 2014, where you are also a member of Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council within South Somerset you must declare a prejudicial interest in any business on the agenda where there is a financial benefit or gain or advantage to Somerset County Council and/or a Town or Parish Council which would be at the cost or to the financial disadvantage of South Somerset District Council. If you have a prejudicial interest you must comply with paragraphs 2.9(b) and 2.9(c) of the Code.

4. Public Question Time

5. Chairman's Announcements

Items for Discussion

6. Chairman's Engagements (Page 6)

7. Council Plan on a Page 2016 to 2021 (Pages 7 - 16)

8. Recruitment to the post of Chief Executive Officer (Pages 17 - 19)

9. Loan to Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Improvements Committee (Pages 20 - 22)

10. Report of Executive Decisions (Pages 23 - 27)

11. Audit Committee (Pages 28 - 29)

12. Scrutiny Committee (Pages 30 - 32)

13. Motions

No Motions have been submitted.

14. Questions Under Procedure Rule 10 (Page 33)

15. Date of Next Meeting (Page 34)

Agenda Item 6

Chairman's Engagements

20th March

Mike attended the Sport Relief event which was held at Yeovil Recreation Ground, and handed out medals to those who had taken part in the race.

1st April

At the invitation of the Mayor of Sherborne, Councillor Dominic Elliott, Tony and Vivienne attended his Civic Event which was held at Sherborne Castle.

10th April

At the invitation of the Provincial Grand Master for Somerset, Tony and Vivienne attended a family service at Wells Cathedral.

17th April

Mike and Liz are due to attend North Somerset Council's Civic Service which is being held at St. Mary's the Virgin Church in Leigh Woods, North Somerset.

At the invitation of the Mayor of Taunton Deane, Councillor Marcia Hill, Tony will attend his Civic Service which is being held at St. Peter's Church, Lyngford. He will be accompanied by Councillor Linda Vijeh.

In the afternoon Tony and Linda will then attend Somerset County Scout Council's awards ceremony which is being held at Tangier Scout and Guide Centre in Taunton.

Agenda Item 7

Council Plan on a Page 2016 to 2021

Executive Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Leader of Council
Strategic Directors: Vega Sturgess, Interim Chief Executive & Strategic Director
Rina Singh, Interim Chief Executive & Strategic Director
Lead Officer: Vega Sturgess, Interim Chief Executive & Strategic Director
Contact Details: vega.sturgess@southsomerset.gov.uk, 01935 462200
rina.singh@southsomerset.gov.uk, 01935 462010

Purpose of the Report

To invite members to consider the new Council Plan (see attached) with a view to endorsing it and recommending its adoption at Full Council on the 21st April 2016.

Public Interest

The SSDC Council Plan is a document that outlines the Council's ambition and key priorities. Generally, council plans do not lay out every action that the council will take but focus on additional actions that, put together with the delivery of important day to day council services, will improve the quality of life in the area.

Recommendations

That Full Council:

- (1) Adopts the new Council Plan 2016 – 2021
- (2) Adopts the Council Plan Annual Action Plan (2016-17)

Background

Members will recall that the previous Council Plan was adopted by Full Council on 23 February 2012.

Rather than produce a long, wordy or costly document, this Council Plan has changed to a simpler approach. It depicts our aims, values, priorities and areas of focus on a single page. This is a document that can be shared widely and hopefully can be easily assimilated and understood. It is titled '*Tackling the Challenges*' and, despite the financial situation, it shows ambition with a co-ordinated and holistic approach. It should deliver outcomes and actions needed and wanted by our communities. The four priority areas from the previous Council Plan (*Economy, Environment, Homes and Health & Communities*) are retained but a new priority area is added, '*High quality, cost effective services*'. This enables the council to make savings to meet future budget shortfalls with the intention that front-line services are protected wherever possible. This Plan on a Page is intended to be a public facing document using language free of jargon as far as is practicable.

Another change is the move to an Annual Action Plan, (Appendix 1). It is important that council plans are resourced and can be delivered. In this era of local government funding uncertainty the Annual Action Plan will bring flexibility to adjust actions to ensure that they are allocated sufficient resources. In this way both staff time and funding can be assessed each year to ensure plans are realistic and can be delivered within budget constraints. The Annual Action Plan also avoids a common drawback with 5-year action plans where the majority of actions are in the first two or three years. A further advantage of an annual plan with prioritised actions is the ability to retain flexibility to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise. It also allows easy monitoring of progress and it is suggested that there is an

annual monitoring report to Full Council on the progress of the Annual Action Plan. This is a document for Councillors and staff. Firstly it enables managers to work with teams and staff to ensure that service plans and individual workplans, quantify targets and then deliver the Council Plan. Secondly, it allows councillors to monitor progress against the actions. Each year the Annual Action Plan will be presented at the same time as the budget.

Many of the projects within the Annual Action Plan have already been agreed by members and have delivery plans and targets and so these have not been reiterated within this plan. Examples would be the Transformation Programme and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Other projects will come to members during the year with developed targets and timetables. Examples here include Castle Cary Market House, Huish Episcopi community swimming pool project and work hubs in Chard and Yeovil.

Appendix 2 is a brief snapshot of some of the key statistics relating to the priority areas. Data has been taken from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which has been developed and agreed by the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board as well as data from other sources.

The Council Plan does not identify every project or action that will be delivered over the next five years. It is important to recognise that these priority areas in the Council Plan are overlaid over a large number of service areas that are important to our residents, businesses and visitors. These are shown in Appendix 3. These diagrams also indicate the range of ways in which SSDC seeks to deliver services to the district. Some years ago, SSDC adopted the principle of 'Enable-Partner-Deliver' and these diagrams indicate how many of our important services are now delivered in partnership with others. They also show where work is contracted into the council as one strand of an income generation approach.

There are two additional sections. Firstly, a glossary of acronyms used and secondly a list of the key partnerships that we will be working with to deliver the Council Plan.

Process

This Council Plan is very much a member-led plan. It has rolled forward the priorities of the previous corporate plan but the future actions have taken account of the needs assessment in the JSNA. It has also incorporated the views of local people which were gathered in face-to-face conversations in the period January – May 2015. Overlaid over that information are the new initiatives such as Devolution, Somerset Rivers Authority, Transformation, Income Generation and the strategic alliance with Sedgemoor District Council.

Management Board and relevant council officers have contributed to the plan process.

Comments made at Scrutiny and District Executive committees have resulted in amendments to the Council Plan on the Page and the Annual Action Plan. These are shown in yellow highlights on the plans. Amendments were also made to Appendix 3 – the Core Work of the Council – and these are shown in red text.

Assuming that Full Council adopt the Council Plan, the highlights referred to above will be removed and any further agreed amendments will be made and the Council Plan on a Page will be published. The Annual Action Plan will then be widely shared internally in order that manager and staff can align their service plans and workloads accordingly.

Finally, work will then start on collating, co-ordinating and prioritising actions for the 2017-18 Annual Action Plan on a Page and members and staff will all have an opportunity to feed into this process during the course of the year. It will be published at the same time as the 2017-18 budget proposals.

Performance Management

Once the Council Plan is agreed, work will begin on developing performance indicators for the council. It is suggested that an annual report is taken to Council on the progress of each Annual Action Plan. Scrutiny Committee may wish to consider a mid-year progress update report. Senior Managers will keep Portfolio Holders apprised of progress in regular Portfolio Holder meetings and service managers will monitor progress at a more detailed level.

Financial Implications

The cost of implementing the Action Plan has been included within the 2016/17 revenue budget. There are also a number of capital schemes that have been allocated funding as follows:-

| Scheme | Approved Funding £ |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Transfer of Castle Cary Market House | 45,000 |
| Huish Episcopi Pool | 200,040 |
| Ham Hill road improvements | 20,000 |
| Yeovil Innovation Centre expansion and car parking | 1,412,000 |
| Provision for house purchases | 2,400,000 |
| Loan for Westlands Sport and Leisure Centre | 1,865,050 |
| Capital funding for Transformation project | 1,314,300 |
| Affordable Housing Schemes - allocated | 2,219,000 |
| Affordable Housing Schemes - unallocated | 1,542,000 |
| Footpaths on open spaces | 237,000 |
| Area Capital Reserves for community and local projects | 600,000 |

A number of projects are outlined as being developed or progressed and these may come forward for further funding once this work has been completed.

The Action Plan for 2017/18 will be brought forward at the same time as the budget is approved.

Council Plan Implications

This report clarifies council plan priorities for the next five years.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

None directly.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None directly.

Privacy Impact Assessment

None directly.

Background Papers

District Executive, 7th April 2016

'Tackling the Challenges' : Council Plan on a Page 2016-21

Vision: South Somerset: a place where businesses flourish, communities are **safe, vibrant and healthy**; where residents enjoy good housing and cultural, leisure and sporting activities.

Aims:

South Somerset will be a confident, resilient and flexible organization, protecting and improving core services, delivering public priorities and acting in the best long-term interests of the district. We will:

- Protect core services to the public by reducing costs and seeking income generation.
- Increase the focus on Jobs and Economic Development.
- Protect and enhance the quality of our environment.
- Enable housing to meet all needs.
- Improve health and reduce health inequalities.

Our Values:

- Putting the customer and community first when developing plans and services.
- Supporting people and communities, enabling them to help themselves.
- Being open, transparent and with greater accessibility to those that need to use council services.
- Working with partners to improve services, efficiencies, resilience and influence.
- Embracing innovation and improved technology to improve customer service and access.
- Empowering a confident, flexible workforce.

Our Priorities – Making a Difference Where it Counts

Page 10

High quality cost effective services

In order to protect front line services we will:

- Transform customer services through technology.
- Actively manage assets and resources to ensure the best financial or community return.
- Seek business opportunities for the council.
- Work with partners to achieve economies, resilience and influence.

Economy

To promote a strong economy with thriving **urban and rural** businesses we will:

- Work with businesses and use our assets to grow our economy.
- Advise and support initiatives that ensure worker skills meet the employers needs.
- Lobby for and support infrastructure improvements to enable growth.
- Capitalise on our high quality culture, leisure and tourism opportunities to bring people to South Somerset.

Environment

To keep South Somerset clean, green and attractive we will:

- Increase recycling.
- Maintain Country Parks and open spaces to promote good mental and physical health.
- Keep streets and neighborhoods clean and attractive.
- Continue to address the impact of flooding.
- Promote a high quality built environment in line with Local Plan.
- Support communities to develop local, parish and neighbourhood plans.

Homes

To work with partners to enable the provision of housing that meets the future and existing needs of residents and employers we will:

- Minimise homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Work with the private rented sector to improve the standard and availability of rented accommodation.
- Tackle fuel poverty.
- Enable people to live independently for as long as they are able.

Health and Communities

To build healthy, self-reliant, **active** communities we will:

- Support communities so that they can identify their needs and develop local solutions.
- Target support to areas of need.
- Help people to live well by enabling quality cultural, leisure, play, sport & healthy lifestyle facilities & activities.
- Work with partners to tackle health issues such as diabetes and hypertension.
- Help keep our communities safe.

Appendix 1 : Annual Action Plan on a Page

Purpose: The Annual Plan outlines agreed high level actions for each year. It will be updated each year, with an annual monitoring report to Full Council.

Priority Levels: Council Plan delivery is designed to be flexible to allow urgent projects to be added mid-year. To aid flexibility, actions are prioritised as **H**igh, **M**edium and **L**ow. Lower priority actions or those in italics will start when capacity allows, when the opportunity arises or if external resource is identified within the project plan.

Our plans for 2016-17

High quality cost effective services

- H** Commence the delivery of the Transformation programme
- H** Set up Income Generation Board and develop prioritised action plan.
- M** Optimise council assets to increase use or receive income.
- H** Take a full role in the emerging Devolution discussions to ensure the best outcome for South Somerset communities.
- H** Work with Sedgemoor District Council on the formation of a strategic alliance to increase influence, resilience and savings.

Economy

- H** Engage pro-actively with the LEP to maximise investment in South Somerset.
- H** Progress key strategic projects such as Lufton 2000 and Chard Regeneration.
- H** Agree a prioritised action plan to deliver local projects with Regeneration Boards.
- H** Progress the key infrastructure projects that unlock development.
- M** Support district-wide roll out of superfast broadband.
- H** Progress work hubs in Chard and Yeovil.
- H** Progress options to improve access /regeneration of Yeovil Town Centre.
- H** Continue to support intern and apprentice scheme.
- M** Deliver a South Somerset food & drink promotional event.

Environment

- H** Agree a new waste and recycling collection model to enhance recycling and reduce costs.
- H** Maintain levels of street cleanliness and increase the joint work with parishes via the parish ranger scheme.
- H** Improve gateway to Ham Hill CP through road and high profile signage scheme.
- H** Increase visitor numbers (and YCP café income) via an exciting events programme.
- H** Diversify volunteering opportunities to increase capacity for projects in all Country Parks.
- M** Begin installing 4km of paths within our open spaces to improve 'access for all'.
- H** With SRA, deliver Enhanced Maintenance Programme.
- M** Deliver or enable a range of energy reduction projects

Homes

- H** Increase housing supply to meet local needs by the agreed investment of £2.4m.
- H** Contribute to the review of DFG effectiveness led by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- H** Work with partners to secure supported hostel and move on accommodation for vulnerable individuals.
- M** Continue to bring empty properties back into use.
- M** Continue to work with CSE on fuel poverty schemes.
- M** Promote Careline to increase take up and enable people to continue living independently.
- M** Develop a Lettings Agency project.
- M** Explore an enhanced landlord accreditation scheme.

Health and Communities

- H** Support residents through national benefit changes including universal credit.
- H** Agree lease, refurbish and relaunch WLC Sport, Conference & Entertainment Facilities.
- H** Deliver Healthy lifestyles projects inc Yr 1 of project to deliver integrated interventions to those with diabetes and hypertension.
- M** Transfer Castle Cary Market House to community.
- H** Enable enhancement of at least 8 play & youth facilities.
- H** Support Huish Episcopi academy community swimming pool project.
- M** Work with partners on public sector hub in Yeovil.
- H** Support at least 50 community projects.
- H** Prepare a plan to develop & deliver leisure facilities in Chard.

Appendix 2 : South Somerset Today – A Snapshot Profile (2016) Purpose: The Council Plan addresses local needs. This summary identifies a number of key facts and figures about the district and suggests areas where we should be focusing our resources to make the maximum impact. Most of the data is taken from the JSNA which is a living document signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Our profile

Corporate

Resident population is 164,569.

Yeovil and Chard are the 2nd and 6th biggest towns in Somerset.

SSDC annual budget for 2016-17 is £17.3 million.

To balance the budget £9.98m has been found in savings since 2010/11.

SSDC needs to save £4.1m by 2020.

In 2006 SSDC had 646 FTE's. In 2016 there are now 420 FTE's.

Jobs

Workday population - 160,193.

South Somerset economy represents over 32% of Somerset's economic value.

5,480 businesses.

Productivity per job is around 85% of UK average.

HoSW ranks 38 out of 39 LEPs on innovation measures including patent registrations and Innovate UK funding.

Top industries are 1 Wholesale, retail, vehicle repair; 2 Manufacturing; 3 Health and social work; 4 Education and 5 Construction.

Somerset GCSE performance 53.8% A*-C (national 56).

Only 76% pupils in Somerset in education /training / employment the year after A levels.

Environment

1025 miles of streets and roads to clean.

76 houses flooded and Muchelney cut off for 10 weeks in 2013/14.

Lack of provision of green open space is linked to self-reported levels of health and mental health for all ages and socio-economic groups (Maas et al 2006).

Three Green Flag Country Parks covering 252Ha, with 100,000's visitors / year.

46.20% household waste reused, recycled and composted.

37,460 Customer transactions at Ninesprings café in 1st year.

48% of Somerset conservation areas are in South Somerset with 4500 listed buildings.

Homes

2072 registered on Homefinder Somerset, 277 in gold or emergency band (March 2016).

In 2013, the ratio of lowest quartile house prices to lowest quartile earnings was 6.9.

Average delivery of affordable housing over the past 4 years is 207/year.

Over the same period over £1m funding SSDC has levered in over £23m from HCA.

Health and Communities

We have a higher proportion of older residents than the national average: 12.8% 65-74yrs (England 9.5%); 10.9% over 75yrs (England 8.1%).

97.3% Somerset residents speak English as their main language.

34,419 of our population are aged 19 and under.

13.2% of children (15 and under) are in child poverty compared to 14.9% in Somerset, 16.2% in SW and 20.6% in England.

HoSW area performs poorly for mental health outcomes.

Some areas of Yeovil are in the 20% most deprived MSOAs in the county.

Above average levels of deprivation around Chard, Crewkerne, Wincanton, Castle Cary and Langport.

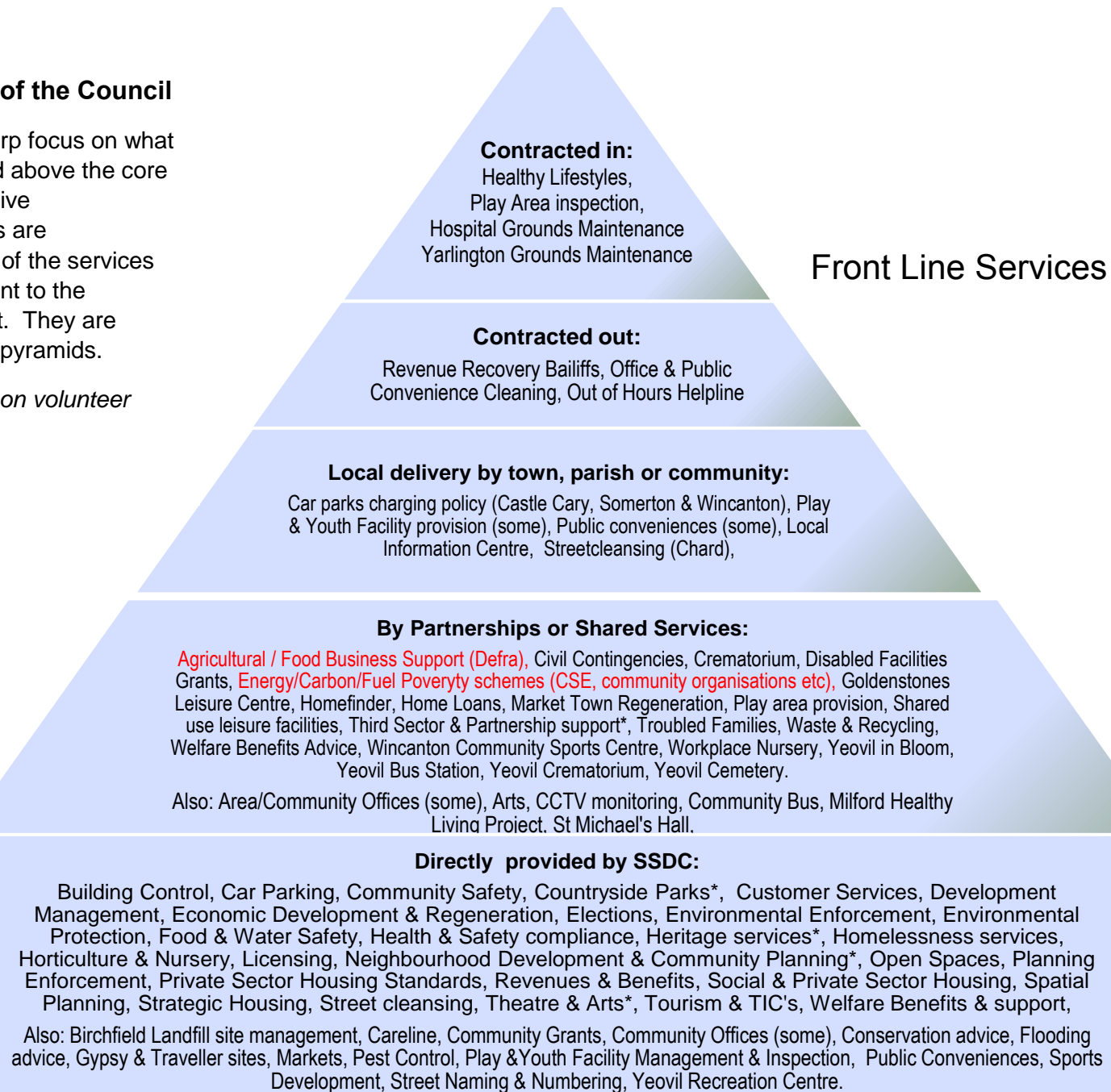
Sources

JSNA <http://www.informsomerset.org.uk> (references many data sources inc Somerset Economic Dashboard), Budget papers and 2010–16 savings summary <http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/about-us/finance/> Housing data from Abris March 2016, Waste data from Q2 performance report December 2015 SWB)

Appendix 3 : Core work of the Council

The Council Plan puts a sharp focus on what we want to achieve over and above the core council services in the next five years. Clearly, these targets are underpinned by the delivery of the services which are extremely important to the residents of South Somerset. They are outlined in the following two pyramids.

* Denotes services that rely on volunteer effort to succeed



Contracted in:
Payroll & HR (SWAP,
Crematorium & Cemetery)

Contracted out:
Cash collection & banking for offices and car
parks, Occupational Health, Property &
Maintenance (Mechanical & Electrical), Workplace
Nursery

By Partnerships or Shared Services:
Audit (SWAP), Benefit Fraud (DWP, National Anti-Fraud
Network & RSL's), Insurance (EDDC)

Directly provided by SSDC:
Asset Management, Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery, Canteen, Councillor Development,
Data Protection, Democratic Services, Engineering Services, Equalities, Financial Services, Fleet
Maintenance, Fraud & Data, Human Resources, ICT, Lean Efficiency work, Legal Services (inc
Land Charges & Rights of Way advice), Management, Marketing & Communications, Payroll,
Performance, Post/Printing/Scanning, Procurement & Risk, Property Maintenance, Scrutiny,
Spatial Systems

Glossary

| | |
|-------|--|
| AGP | Artificial Grass Pitch |
| CCTV | Closed Circuit Television |
| CLICK | Chard, Ilminster and Crewkerne GP Federation |
| CSE | Centre for Sustainable Energy |
| CP | Country Park |
| DFG | Disabled Facility Grant |
| DWP | Department of Work & Pensions |
| DX | District Executive |
| EDDC | East Devon District Council |
| HCA | Homes & Communities Agency |
| HoSW | Heart of the South West (Devolution) |
| HR | Human Resources |
| JLAG | Joint Leaders Advisory Group (with Sedgemoor District Council) |
| JSNA | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment |
| LED | Leisure East Devon |

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------|
| LEP | Local Enterprise Partnership(s) |
| MTIG | Market Towns Investment Group |
| MSOA | Middle Layer Super Output Area |
| RSL's | Registered Social Landlords |
| SASG | Strategic Asset Steering Group |
| SDC | Sedgemoor District Council |
| SRA | Somerset Rivers Authority |
| SSDC | South Somerset District Council |
| SWB | Somerset Waste Board |
| SWAP | South West Audit Partnership |
| SWP | Somerset Waste Partnership |
| TIC | Tourist Information Centre |
| WLC | Westlands Leisure Complex |
| YCP | Yeovil Country Park |

Partnerships that will support the delivery of the Council Plan

Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Chard Regeneration Scheme (Chard Vision)
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB
Heart of the South West (LEP)
Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership
Homefinder Somerset Partnership & Strategic IT
Market Towns Investment Group
Safer Somerset Partnership
Joint Leaders Advisory Group (Sedgemoor DC)
Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership
Somerset Intelligence Partnership
Somerset Levels & Moors Local Action for Rural Communities

Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership
Somerset Rivers Authority
Somerset Waste Partnership
Somerset Water Management Partnership
South Somerset Together (LSP)
South West Audit Partnership
Strategic Partnership Against Hate Crime
The Stop Line Way
Town & Parish Councils
Yeovil Vision

Agenda Item 8

Recruitment to the post of Chief Executive Officer

Executive Portfolio Holder: Ric Pallister, Leader of Council, Strategy & Policy
Contact Details: ric.pallister@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462101

Purpose of the Report

This report seeks authorisation from Council to recruit a new Chief Executive Officer to drive forward the organisational changes and new ways of working that the District Council will require in the future. The decision to commence Transformation and Income Generation in order to meet the considerable financial challenges facing the Council within the next 3 years will require a unified workforce under strong and effective leadership. It is considered that change on this scale will require a dedicated Chief Executive with both the skills and commitment to deliver the required outcomes.

Public Interest

In order to meet the externally imposed financial challenges facing the Council, only through a significant change in the way that Council services are delivered to the public can savings be realised and the quality of services be maintained or improved. At the same time extending the Council's thinking through an enhanced commercial approach to Income Generation will require new or adapted skill sets if the financial challenge is to be met without detriment to our services to the public. SSDC currently employs a workforce of over 400 who will require strong and inspirational leadership through this period of change.

Recommendations

That Full Council:

- i. Authorise the recruitment of a new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) through an open recruitment process and at an annual salary set out in the Financial Implications section of this report.
- ii. Appoint Rina Singh initially as interim acting CEO from today's date until such time as a new CEO is appointed. This interim appointment can be reviewed by Council at any time but in any event will be formally reviewed by Council should no appointment of a new CEO be made within 6 months.
- iii. Authorise the Appointments Committee, with such external specialist support as it considers necessary (in consultation with the HR Manager), to proceed with preparing the job and person specification for the new post and making all necessary arrangements for shortlisting, testing and interviewing candidates. On completion of these stages the Appointments Committee will recommend to Council which (if any) of the candidates should be appointed.
- iv. Approve the use of £69,664 of unallocated balances and note that the senior management costs will remain within the cost envelope outlined (with adjustments for changes to NI, pensions, and pay awards) by 2017/18.

1. Background

Since 1st August 2015 SSDC has operated without a substantive Chief Executive Officer (CEO) following the decision to cease the contractual arrangement with East Devon District Council. In July 2015 Full Council authorised a group of 4 members consisting of the Leader, Deputy Leader, Leader of the Conservative Group and Spokesperson for the Independent members (Leader's Working Group [LWG]) to consider the future Senior Management arrangements within the Council. The starting point was a consideration of whether the Council could operate satisfactorily with just two senior officers; a CEO and one Director.

During the course of considering a structure, the future face of Local Government, following the election, was clearly set to change and this suggested that a merger with another Somerset authority should receive active consideration. The Council authorised the Leader's Working Group to explore potential Joint Authority working with each of the Somerset District Councils. A decision to create a Joint Authority would have seen the likely merger of the senior management teams and the creation of a single CEO. Thus, whilst such an option was being considered it was decided to rotate the position of acting CEO between the two Strategic Directors on a monthly basis. This arrangement has been operating since August 2015.

In February 2016 Council made a decision not to merge and create a Joint Authority with another Somerset District Council at this point. Instead the decision was taken to begin the process of working towards two major changes within SSDC in order to meet the large budget gap that will exist by 2019-20. The first, and most significant, was a decision to commence a Transformation programme for the Council and the second was to have a major focus on Income Generation. Both these strands were considered important in meeting the financial challenges facing this Council. It was also jointly decided to work collaboratively with Sedgemoor District Council through a Strategic Alliance to seek further economies, ensure service resilience and jointly explore commercial business opportunities as a key part of Income Generation.

Given the scale of this undertaking and the decision not to merge with another Council, the Leader's Working Group has reached a conclusion that there is a need to recruit a new CEO as soon as practicable. This view was reinforced by the advice of an external adviser. The Appointments Committee, which is comprised of Cllrs Ric Pallister, Jo Roundell Greene, Tim Inglefield, Sylvia Seal, Angie Singleton, Andrew Turpin, Martin Wale and Colin Winder, will be responsible, in consultation with the HR Manager, for deciding which external support it requires and determining the job and person specification. It will decide the recruitment process and both shortlist and interview candidates. At the end of the process it will make a recommendation to Council in relation which of the candidates should be appointed. Whilst the Appointments Committee will be responsible for the process it will ensure that there are opportunities for Members and staff to meet and "gently" interrogate the candidates.

2. New Operating Model

Over the past 10 years SSDC has managed to reduce its senior management team from one Full time CEO plus 6 Directors to a ½ time CEO and 2 Directors. In terminating the contractual arrangement with East Devon, members concluded that a future senior

management team of 1 CEO and 1 Director could meet the Authority's needs. Despite the changes being proposed through Transformation, the LWG considers that such a strategic top tier remains the correct balance. The final size and shape of the management team can only be accurately determined as part of the Transformation journey and the new CEO will play an integral role in determining the shape and feel of the management arrangements they consider appropriate but it is considered that there will always be a need for a professional "Captain of the Ship" in any arrangements going forward.

3. Position of Acting CEO

The monthly rotation of acting CEO between the Strategic Directors, whilst acceptable for a short period, is not the ideal way of continuing to manage the Authority even in this interim phase. Despite this, both Vega Sturgess and Rina Singh have done an admirable job through a difficult, and at times challenging, period with Devolution and potential Joint Authority business case work requiring significant additional work. The LWG is now recommending that, in order to reinforce the priority being given to Transformation, Rina Singh should be appointed as the initial interim acting CEO until the new CEO is appointed. The position can be reviewed at any time, however, if no appointment is made within 6 months then the position should be formally reviewed by Council.

4. Financial Implications

The Leader of the Council has taken external advice regarding the proposed salary from South West Provincial Authorities. The advice outlined that the salary should be £110,000 per annum and has been assessed from benchmarking similar authorities. With on costs this totals £139,328.

Whilst the position of the new CEO will attract additional costs in the initial period, it is expected that by the beginning of the 2017/18 financial year there will be a requirement for one CEO plus one Director at the top of the organisation and this means that the overall cost envelope for the senior management team by that point can be contained within the existing budget of £849,292 (with adjustment made only for pay awards, national insurance, and pension contributions). The costs in the intervening period expected to be six months from appointment £69,664 can be found from unallocated balances.

Any associated redundancy costs will be met from the £2.4 million allocated to the transformation project for this purpose.

Agenda Item 9

Loan to Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Improvements Committee

Lead Officer: Donna Parham, Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services
Contact Details: Donna.Parham@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01963) 462225

Purpose of the Report

To request that full Council approves the underwriting of a loan of £65,000 to Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Improvements Committee (KEAIC) (a registered charity) while they continue to fund-raise for the balance of budget needed to complete the new build Kingsbury Episcopi Community Centre. The underwriting will enable the charity to access the Big Lottery funding of £804,000.

Recommendations

That Council:

1. approve a loan of £65,000 to Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities Improvements Committee (KEAIC), to be repaid over 10 years if required, from the available capital balances;
2. agrees that the final decision regarding whether a guarantee is required is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services in consultation with the Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services and the Assistant Director – Legal and Corporate Services once all options have been explored.

Background

KEAIC has been granted £804,000 in Lottery funding and this, together with substantial fundraising by the community, has achieved 91% of the construction, finishing and landscaping costs of building the Kingsbury Community Centre. To release funds enabling the construction work to begin, KEAIC must demonstrate that sufficient funds are available for completion of the project.

SSDC's Loan Policy

SSDC agreed a loans policy in 2003 to provide short to medium term loans at manageable interest rates, to enable community groups to achieve their, and the Council's, objectives. Loans can be agreed by District Executive when they are made under the policy's criteria. If the loan is outside the criteria then full Council must approve the loan. This loan falls outside the policy because of the following:-

- the capital payments are deferred for 12 months (the policy does not allow deferral)
- there may not be an available guarantee as the Big Lottery Fund has already required a first charge over the property.

Report

Kingsbury Episcopi is a village with a vibrant self-help community which came together to address the pressing need for a community centre. Evidence collected through open days,

discussion groups and questionnaires, showed the need for one community building for three specific purposes:

Community Shop

Kingsbury's last grocery shop closed in September 2002. In 2008, residents formed Kingsbury Community Shop Project committee and in March 2011, this became an Industrial & Provident Society - Kingsbury Community Enterprise Ltd. The shop opened in 2012, and has been run by 60 volunteers and sited in a shipping container with temporary planning permission which expires this year.

Footfall has remained consistent with turnover showing a year on year improvement and the shop is considered to be succeeding not only financially, but also in providing a meeting place and important social hub.

Changing Rooms

Play equipment and facilities on the recreation ground have been developed to cater for all age groups and the football pitches are maintained to a high standard but the changing area is a portacabin with facilities which do not meet current recommendations, preventing the development of junior teams and letting of the facilities. Secure storage space is needed for maintenance and sports equipment and equipment for the community's annual, major fund-raising. The provision of an accessible outside toilet has also been identified as much-needed.

Community Hall

Over 50% of the children at the village primary school live in the parish, warranting good recreational facilities with space suitable for indoor family and community activities. The school has limited space for whole-school productions and there are no facilities for large indoor events in the village.

KEAIC is confident that it will be possible to raise the remaining £65,000 balance of the cost of building the new Community Centre through fund-raising and pending grant applications - in all likelihood within the next twelve months. However, for the Lottery to release payment of the Reaching Communities Buildings Fund grant, so that building work can commence, KEAIC must demonstrate they have access to sufficient financial resources to complete the project.

Financial Implications

The loan of £65,000 if required will be found from capital resources. There will be no impact in revenue terms as the interest will be repaid as part of the loan. The capital sum will be returned to capital balances over the 10 year period of the loan.

This loan requires Council approval as KEAIC wish to defer the first 12 months repayments to give them time to ensure the community centre and shop are up and running sufficiently to repay the loan. The interest will be payable from the beginning of the loan. The loan will be fixed at an interest rate of approximately 1.97% (the same rate as the cost of Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing for 10 years). The annual payments would be approximately £1,281 rising to around £7,869 once the deferred period has ceased. The final rate will attract a fixed rate of interest for the duration of the loan period, being the PWLB rate at the time the grant is awarded.

Accounts have been provided for Kingsbury Episcopi Amenities fund for the last three years and business plans and cash flow for the next three years for the new community building. Although these show a small loss for the community building other activities such as Party by the Parrett, and the Lowland Games ensure that overall there is a surplus that improves over the first three years. A deferral of the repayment of the capital element of the loan for the first year would be beneficial to the charity while the community building is setting up its customer base.

The Big Lottery Fund have already taken a first charge over the property and have outlined that their approval is required for any further charges to be made. The other possible option is that the parish council may be able to provide a guarantee. These discussions are underway and have not yet been completed. Members are therefore requested to delegate the final decision on the requirements of any guarantee to the Portfolio Holder Finance and Legal Services in consultation with the Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services and the Assistant Director – Legal and Corporate Services once all options have been explored.

The Area North Committee has approved £40,000 of grant funding for the project.

Background Papers

None

Agenda Item 10

Report of Executive Decisions

Lead Officer: Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager

Contact Details: angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148

This report is submitted for information and summarises decisions taken by the District Executive and Portfolio Holders since the last meeting of Council in March 2016. The decisions are set out in the attached Appendix.

A meeting of the District Executive was held on 7th April 2016.

Members are invited to ask any questions of the Portfolio Holders.

Background Papers

All Published

*Ric Pallister, Leader of the Council
Angela Cox, Democratic Services Manager
angela.cox@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462148*

Appendix

| Portfolio | Subject | Decision | Taken By | Date |
|--|---|--|--------------------|----------|
| Leader, Strategy and Policy | SSDC Transformation Programme | <p>District Executive recommended Full Council to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Accept the Headline Business Case for Transformation, attached in Appendix A including the vision and principles for transformation and note the headline risks, and equality impact assessment included in this report. ii. Agree the Transformation Programme governance arrangements as set out in section 6 of this report. iii. Delegate authority to deliver the Programme to the Leader of the Council with the approval of the Programme Board. iv. Approve that savings of £2,000,000 be added to the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 and 2018/19. v. Approve that £59,975 for ongoing software maintenance costs is added to the Medium Term Financial Plan as an ongoing commitment from 2017/18. vi. Approve that the £394,000 currently held in the Voluntary Redundancy Reserve is transferred to a new Transformation Reserve to fund this programme. vii. Allocate £1,314,300 from capital receipts set aside in the budget for transformation to fund for this programme. viii. Agree that the further revenue cost of £2,754,000 is funded from the Revenue Support Reserve. | District Executive | 03/03/16 |
| Strategy and Policy Environment and Economic Development Leisure and Culture | District-wide Voluntary Sector Grants 2016/17 | <p>District Executive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approved the proposed funding for 2016/17, for the organisations numbered 3 to 5 in Table 1 (Access for All £8,000, Somerset Rural Youth Project £8,000, Actiontrack Performance Company £2,000, Take Art £10,500, Somerset Art Works £3,500, Somerset Film £2,000) 2. noted that 2016/17 funding for Citizens Advice South Somerset and South Somerset Voluntary and Community Action were subject to separate reports following reviews commissioned by the Portfolio Holder. In both cases District Executive recommended a further 12 month funding at the 2015/16 level. | District Executive | 03/03/16 |

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------|----------|
| Strategy and Policy | Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 3 rd Quarter 2015/16 | District Executive noted the corporate performance monitoring report. | District Executive | 03/03/16 |
| Finance & Legal Services | Proposed amendments to the Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Policy | District Executive: (a) Approved the amended Discretionary Rate Relief Policy (DRRP) which will come into effect on 1 April 2016; (b) Noted the DRRP Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group have considered and support the proposed amendments. | District Executive | 03/03/16 |
| Finance and legal Services Strategic Planning (Place Making) | SSDC Response to New Homes Bonus Consultation | District Executive approved the response to the DCLG Consultation on New Homes Bonus attached at Appendix A. | District Executive | 03/03/16 |
| Strategy and Policy | Consent for disposal of a property in Long Sutton by Yarlington Housing Group | The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy has agreed to advise Yarlington Housing Group that in the light of the views of the elected member for the ward, SSDC does not support their proposed disposal of number 20, Langport Road, Long Sutton. | Portfolio Holder | 04/03/16 |
| Strategy and Policy | Affordable Housing development Programme: Chard Working Men's Club | The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy has agreed to approve the allocation of £6,544.28 grant subsidy to Stonewater Housing Association towards the overall refurbishment costs of the former Chard Working Men's Club building. | Portfolio Holder | 04/03/16 |

Appendix

| Portfolio | Subject | Decision | Taken By | Date |
|---------------------|---|--|--------------------|----------|
| Leader of Council | SSDC Council Plan 2016 to 2021 | District Executive: 1. recommended that Full Council adopt the new SSDC Council Plan 2016 – 2021. 2. recommended that Full Council adopt the Council Plan Annual Action Plan (2016-17). | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Leisure and Culture | Gypsy Site Management | District Executive: 1. approved the appointment of Elim Housing, for a five year period, to manage the Council's Gypsy sites at Ilton, Tintinhull and Pitney. 2. authorised the Portfolio Holder (Leisure and Culture) in conjunction with the Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) and the Housing and Welfare Manager to negotiate and finalise the Management Agreement. 3. instructed officers to report on performance annually. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Leisure and Culture | Huish Episcopi Academy Swimming Pool Project Funding Decision | District Executive: 1. approved, subject to the standard Leisure grant terms and conditions, that South Somerset District Council agreed to award Huish Episcopi Academy a grant of up to £352,722 towards the enclosure of the existing outdoor pool to provide indoor swimming for school and community use, consisting of: i. £200,038 capital grant. ii. £105,837 of Section 106 contributions that have been paid to the Council. iii. £46,847 of Section 106 contributions which have not been received by the Council. 2. agreed to underwrite the Section 106 contributions not received by the Council up to £46,847 from the SSDC capital programme in the event those sums are not received by the Council by the time HEA needs to draw those funds down for the project. 3. agreed that the loss of £6,300 interest be added to the 17/18 Medium Term Financial Plan. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Strategy and Policy | Affordable Housing - revenue grant funding for Direct Access Hostel provision | District Executive: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approved the selection of Stonham, for a one year period, to provide services to assist single adults who are in need of accommodation, to prevent homelessness and enable them to live independently. 2. approved the use of up to £240,500 of the £319,000 that was set aside in the budget for this purpose. 3. noted that £80,000 of this would underwrite the risk associated with the structure of eligible / ineligible intensive housing management and general housing management tasks in relation to housing benefit. 4. noted that a report would be made in due course on proposals for the future ongoing delivery of the service from May 2017. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Property and Climate Change | Asset Transfer of Castle Cary Market House | District Executive: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agreed to the transfer of Castle Cary Market House to Castle Cary Town Council on a 999-year peppercorn lease; 2. agreed that, subject to finalising terms, a capital dowry of £45,000 be transferred to the Town Council in respect of an outstanding programme of refurbishment that is required in the short and medium term; 3. noted that current income streams from existing tenants would also be transferred to Castle Cary Town Council along with the management of the property; 4. agreed that £7,350, being the difference between the income from existing tenants and budget allocated to the property be added to the Medium Term Financial Plan. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Strategic Planning (Place Making) | Designation of Neighbourhood Area - Martock Parish | District Executive: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agreed to designate the Civil Parish of Martock as a Neighbourhood Area for the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Localism Act 2011. 2. noted the change in the level of financial support to Local Planning Authorities supporting the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Strategic Planning (Place Making) | Community Right to Bid Quarterly Update Report | District Executive noted the report. | District Executive | 07/04/16 |
| Property and Climate Change Strategy and Policy | 72 South Street, Yeovil Lease Amendment | The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change and the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Policy, in consultation with the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services), has agreed to remove the break clause within the 72 South Street, Yeovil lease to Somerset Care and Repair. | Portfolio Holder | 08/04/16 Executive Bulletin No.693 |

Agenda Item 11

Audit Committee

This report summarises the items considered by the Audit Committee on 24 March 2016.

Grant Thornton Audit Committee Update for SSDC

David Johnson, Audit Manager at Grant Thornton, presented the progress report and emerging issues from Grant Thornton the external auditors for SSDC. He referred to progress to date and highlighted the following points:

- The 2015-16 Accounts Audit Plan would be presented to the April Audit Committee;
- The 2015-16 final accounts audit was still planned for June 2016. Sign off of the final accounts had been brought forward to 31st July with submission of the accounts required in May;
- Work on the Value for Money conclusion was still in progress. There had been some changes to the work in value for money arrangements which was now much more risk focussed resulting in a more applicable report for the Council. The work would be outlined in the Audit Findings Report due to be presented in July;
- There were a number of other areas of interest to the Council including the summary findings of financial health checks and governance reviews and CFO insights – an online financial analysis tool;
- Changes to the 2015/16 Accounting Code by the introduction of 'Fair Value Measurement';
- Local Authorities would need to estimate a provision for unlogged non-domestic rate appeals.

The Audit Committee were content to note the contents of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Report on Counter Fraud Work

The Fraud and Data Manager presented the report as detailed in the agenda. She highlighted that the Revenues and Benefits Team at SSDC had received funding under the DWP Fraud and Error Reduction Incentive Scheme, which covers Housing Benefit to undertake additional targeted case reviews to identify unreported changes of circumstances. She also referred members to the revised SSDC Counter Fraud Strategy Action Plan which detailed the tasks to be completed in the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 and gave an update on progress over the last year.

In response to member questions, the Fraud and Data Manager and the Investigations Manager (South West Counter Fraud partnership) confirmed that:

- The Whistleblowing Policy was available on the Council's website and an article had also been included in the Councillors newsletter 'Inform'. The policy would be kept under review;
- A significant amount of work had been undertaken to raise awareness of fraud with staff through the provision of training sessions;
- Fraud awareness training for elected members would be undertaken in the coming months. It was suggested that a presentation could be made prior to a Full Council meeting;
- The public were encouraged to report fraud through the Somerset Fraud website and Customers First were trained to deal with reporting cases;
- Some improvement was required with interlinking with the Department of Work and Pensions.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their hard work and providing an informative report.

RESOLVED: That the progress on counter fraud work and the revised Annual Counter Fraud Action Plan be noted.

Exemptions from Procurement Procedure Rules

The Procurement and Risk Manager presented the report which updated members on any requested exemptions from the Procurement Procedure Rules during the financial year.

In response to a member question, the Procurement and Risk Manager advised that the new sound system for the Octagon required an exemption because of the specialist nature of the equipment and the knowledge of the provider.

The Procurement and Risk Manager advised that he intended to provide members of the Committee with some awareness training on Procurement Fraud and what there is in place to mitigate the risk of fraud in procurement occurring.

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2016/17 SWAP Internal Audit Charter

The Assistant Director (South West Audit Partnership – SWAP) presented the report. She explained that the Internal Audit Charter was presented to the Audit Committee on an annual basis and remained the same as approved in June 2015 with the exception of a few amendments to job titles.

Members were content to approve the Internal Audit Annual Report.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

2016/17 SWAP Internal Audit Plan

The Assistant Director (South West Audit Partnership – SWAP) introduced the SWAP Internal Audit Plan for 2016/17. She advised that the total number of audit days planned for 2016-17 was 333 days which was a reduction from the previous year but assured members that there were sufficient days to be able to provide an overall assurance rating on the Council's internal control framework and governance.

The Assistant Director (South West Audit Partnership – SWAP) referred members to Appendix A which gave details of the audits planned for 2016-17. She noted that audits for Culture and Safeguarding had not been undertaken before. A Healthy Organisation audit had been trialled at other Councils and proved very successful.

Members were content to approve the Internal Audit Plan of 333 days for April 2016 to March 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Internal Audit Plan of 333 days for April 2016 to March 2017 be approved.

Councillor Derek Yeomans
Chairman of Audit Committee

Agenda Item 12

Scrutiny Committee

At their meeting on 5th April 2016, members of Scrutiny Committee considered the following items:

Musgrove Park Hospital Report

Members asked how effectively Somerset County Council are discharging their statutory Health Scrutiny role across the County?

SSDC Council Plan 2016

Members noted that this is first iteration of the Council Plan and that as it passes through Scrutiny, District Executive and ultimately Full Council there will be some opportunity for wider member engagement in the Plan – although it was noted that this involvement is not as extensive as it has been in the past.

Whilst accepting that the plan is a realistic analysis of the Council's aims and objectives over the coming years and that more service level detail would be available in the annual plan members felt that the one page plan would benefit from more SMART targets where appropriate – allowing for more effective public monitoring of progress.

Members questioned if the information from some residents gained in the pre-election period in 2015 was an adequate assessment of the communities priorities – bearing in mind this is now 12 months old?

It was suggested that the appendices of the plan be amended to include a specific action to work in partnership with the appropriate agencies to reduce carbon emissions?

It was noted that Town and Parish councils no longer provide licensing services.

Members suggested that a document needs to be created of potential future plans – aspirational projects that will be brought forward as and when conditions are right. This will ensure the public can see the status of projects within their own communities and will be able to see that SSDC remains committed to such projects.

Scrutiny suggest that the 'Economy' element of the Plan should also make explicit reference to the importance of agriculture and the very rural nature of the district. Members felt that as it currently reads, the plan does not accurately reflect the rurality of South Somerset.

Members preferred the new format of the Plan stating that it is very accessible.

Members sought clarification as to the numbers of actions defined as 'High' priority – they noted that Management Board feel that whilst it will be a stretch, the priorities are spread fairly evenly across the authority. Are all 'high' priorities equally 'high' or are there degrees of importance?

Scrutiny welcomed the Leader's commitment that Scrutiny will be actively involved in the reassessment of the Corporate Performance indicators that will flow from the adoption of this Council Plan.

Members recommended that 6 monthly updates on progress be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

Gypsy Site Management

Members agreed with the recommendations in the report and thanked the officers for their work in bringing forward this option for the future management of this service. The Committee were reassured to note that the sinking fund created to cover the costs of replacing the Park Homes at the end of their useful life will be maintained.

Members were reassured that SSDC would maintain a presence on the sites through quarterly site inspections.

Huish Episcopi Swimming Pool

Members commended the officers concerned for securing Sport England funding for two SSDC projects.

Members noted that Academies are considered as any other legal entity in terms of awarding funding.

The Committee was pleased to note that progress is being made to secure a future collaboration with Somerset County Council regarding swimming pool provision in Area West.

Members sought clarity about Para. 25 in the report - in the table entitled 'confirmed funding' it is stated that £20k of community funding remains to be raised.

The Committee noted that any over contractual overspends would be the responsibility of the Academy.

The Committee support the report recommendations.

Affordable Housing – Direct Access Hostel Provision

Members noted that this represents the best short term solution for SSDC to meet our statutory obligations whilst a more sustainable county wide solution is drawn up and therefore support the recommendations.

Members did comment that in the past, SSDC has made public statements that we would not cover any shortfall in service provision caused by a reduction in funding from Somerset County Council – this seems to represent a move away from this stance.

Asset Transfer of Castle Cary Market House

Members supported the recommendations.

Designation of Neighbourhood Area – Martock Parish

Members noted that the report states that government funding that was initially available to SSDC for administering the Neighbourhood Planning process is now reducing whilst the number of applications to create Neighbourhood Plans is increasing. Members queried whether insufficient district council resources could be cited as grounds for refusing to designate a Neighbourhood Plan area?

Members also asked how many applications need to be received before there needs to be a reassessment of priorities within the Spatial Planning Team?

The Scrutiny Committee noted the potential risks to capacity mentioned in the report and asked that they are updated as necessary.

Community Right to bid

Members noted the recommendations contained within the report.

Task and Finish Reviews

Homefinder Somerset / Consent for Disposal

After the first meetings of these two Task and Finish Groups it became evident that there was overlap between the scope of each review and that in terms of gathering evidence from Registered Providers within the district, it would make sense to hold a combined evidence gathering session. Such a session is now being arranged for later on this month.

Community Council for Somerset

The Scrutiny Committee have agreed to conduct a review of the Community Council for Somerset, in particular the services provided by the Community Council and how they work in partnership with the District Council.

Task and Finish Groups have now commenced work to monitor the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to review the Housing Benefit Discretionary Housing Payment Policy; invitations to participate in these have been circulated to all members. If members have not yet responded and wish to be involved in these reviews, please contact Emily McGuinness as soon as possible.

Scrutiny Committee encourages all members to participate in Task and Finish work; it provides an excellent opportunity for members to review an area of work in detail, work with officers and help formulate recommendations for the creation and amendment of policy and working practice. All Task and Finish groups agree their own scope, project plan and meeting timetable to best suit the group, so should be able to work around existing commitments.

Councillor Sue Steele
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

Agenda Item 14

Questions under Procedure Rule 10

The following question has been submitted by Councillor Mike Beech:-

In response to the question "is the Octagon Theatre up to its pooling limit?" the following response was received from Steve Joel, Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being):

More than 5 obligations have been secured since April 2010 to enhance the 'general' capacity of the Octagon Theatre.

In order to work around the limits on pooling S106 contributions whilst we await the introduction of the CIL scheme for South Somerset, we have taken the opportunity to update our strategy with regard to addressing the overall deficiency in professional arts and entertainment provision.

Our strategy is now to pool contributions up to the limit for the range of 'specific' long-term enhancements planned for the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil, and/or to pool contributions up to the limit for the range of 'specific' enhancements planned for the Westlands Entertainment Complex in Yeovil (Policy TAC2). These projects are also listed in the Council's published IDP.

The first being of these specific enhancements is a new Studio Theatre at Octagon Theatre in Yeovil (Policy TAC1.1), and/or the stage refit at the Westlands Entertainment complex (Policy TAC2.1). No contributions have been pooled for these specific mitigations for Theatres and Arts Centres, which means that the Council can seek off site contributions for them.

Once the limits have been reached for Policy TAC1.1 and Policy TAC2.1, then the Council will seek contributions for specific enhancements TAC1.2 and Policy TAC2.2 and so on, until such time as our CIL Scheme comes online. In this way we continue to optimise the amount of contributions being sought from new development, and of course, reduce pressures upon our capital resources over the medium to longer term.

Can the Portfolio Holder assure the council that the position being taken regarding S106 pooling is entirely legal and tested in law?

Agenda Item 15

Date of Next Meeting

Members are asked to note that the Annual meeting of the Full Council will take place on **Thursday, 19th May 2016** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil **commencing at 7.30 p.m.**
