

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Brympton Way, YEOVIL, Somerset BA20 2HT on Thursday 5 November 2015.**

(9.30 am - 10.20 am)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Peter Gubbins	Sylvia Seal
Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton
Shane Pledger	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	

Also Present:

Jason Baker	Tony Lock
Mike Beech	David Norris
Dave Bulmer	Sue Osborne
Tim Inglefield	Sue Steele
Val Keitch	Colin Winder

Officers

Vega Sturgess	Interim Chief Executive
Ian Clarke	Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
David Norris	Development Manager
Alasdair Bell	Environmental Health Manager
Jo Wilkins	Policy Planner
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Manager

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

81. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 1st October 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

82. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carol Goodall, Peter Seib and Rina Singh, Strategic Director.

83. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made.

84. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

85. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman reminded Members that SSDC telephone calls would be routed to the Taunton Deane Careline service from at 3.00pm that day to allow staff to attend the funeral of staff-member Janette McDougall.

Councillor Sylvia Seal reported that the Gold Star Awards had taken place the previous week at the Octagon Theatre where the capacity audience had enjoyed an evening of entertainment and awards to young people.

86. Adoption of the South Somerset District Council Statement of Community Involvement (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) commended the Policy Planner for her work in completing the Statement of Community Involvement. She confirmed that it had been presented to a Portfolio Holder Briefing, a meeting of the Area Chairmen and had been subject to public consultation.

The Policy Planner advised that the previous Statement of Community Involvement had been compiled in 2007 and was now out of date. The new document now reflected the latest regulations and contained a section relating to Neighbourhood Planning to bring it up to date.

Councillor Sue Steele, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said they had questioned whether the 6 week consultation period was adequate, but they had been informed that this was the standard period.

In response to questions from Members, the Assistant Director (Economy) and the Development Manager confirmed:-

- The lead local flood authority were a main consultee and they would consult with the relevant Internal Drainage Board as appropriate, however SSDC would also consult Internal Drainage Board's directly where it was felt necessary.
- All local authorities would welcome a centralised method of calculating a five year housing land supply, rather than relying upon individual Planning Inspectors rulings. Representations on this issue had been made to the Government through the Leader and the District Councils Network.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to endorse the recommendations for final confirmation by Full Council.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive recommends that Council:

1. endorse and adopt the South Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (November 2015) (**Appendix A**)
2. delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director for Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning (Place Making) to make any final minor text amendments that may be necessary to enable the South Somerset Statement of Community Involvement, (November 2015) to be adopted.

Reason: To confirm the South Somerset Statement of Community Involvement (November 2015) be endorsed by District Executive and can progress to Full Council to be formally adopted.

87. Adoption of the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman advised that the Strategy had been discussed at his Portfolio Holder briefing and it incorporated all the elements of the Environmental Health Service relating to private sector housing.

Councillor Sue Steele, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, requested that in future Strategy documents be presented to the Scrutiny Committee as they could provide a valuable contribution.

In response to questions from Members, the Chairman and the Environmental Health Manager advised:-

- Although homelessness was currently under control at SSDC there was no guarantee that this would be the case in the future. Somerset County Council had considered it a high risk category to include in the Strategy document.
- The actions contained in the Private Sector Housing Strategy would be monitored by the Environmental Health Manager throughout the year and at Portfolio Holder briefings.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to endorse the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19 for final confirmation by Full Council.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive recommends that Council adopt the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19 in Appendix 1 concerning private sector housing matters as future strategy of the Council.

Reason: To confirm the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2015-19 be endorsed by District Executive and can progress to Full Council to be formally adopted.

88. Disposal of the former Carrington Way Public Conveniences in Wincanton (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change said the former toilets had not been used for some time and SSDC had sought to dispose of them. A good price had been offered and so the recommendation was to dispose of them.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that Somerset County Council were offered the first option to purchase the building as they owned the surrounding land, but they did not express any interest. The property only benefitted from pedestrian access and would be sold with this right.

The Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services) confirmed that the payment of legal and professional costs was as recommended by the District Valuer.

There was no further debate and Members were content to confirm the disposal of the freehold of the former Carrington Way Public Conveniences in Wincanton.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed:

1. to the disposal of the freehold of the former Carrington Way Public Conveniences in Wincanton at a price of £29,000. The disposal is subject to the purchaser obtaining A3 change of use planning;
2. that a restrictive usage covenant and overage clause be placed on the Title protecting against any future residential development or change of use;
3. that each party bears their own legal and professional costs.

Reason: To obtain consent to the disposal of the former Carrington Way Public Conveniences (PCs) in Wincanton.

89. 2015/16 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2015 (Agenda Item 9)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) confirmed that it was likely the revenue budget would be underspent and the end of the financial year and this underspend would be put towards the 2016/17 revenue budget. She also noted that the Council Tax collection rate had improved and the Business Rate collection rate was still improving. The discretionary housing payments budget may be overspent by the end of the financial year as the DWP contribution had reduced and if this occurred then she would request additional funding.

There were no questions from the Scrutiny Committee and Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed to:

- a. note the current 2015/16 financial position of the Council;
- b. note the reasons for variations to the previously approved Directorate Budgets as detailed in paragraphs 3.2;

- c. note the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 11.1 and the position of the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in Appendix D;
- d. note 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 September 2015.

90. 2015/16 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 30th September 2015 (Agenda Item 10)

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) asked if Members were content to note the slippage over £50,000 in the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 8, and confirm that the projects not yet completed remain in the Capital Programme.

There were no questions from the Scrutiny Committee and Members were content to approve the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed to:

- a. approve the revised capital programme spend as detailed in paragraph 6;
- b. note the slippage over £50,000 in the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 8;
- c. approve the virements of £5,000 outline in paragraph 9;
- d. approve the allocation of any additional funding to be used within the capital programme as detailed in paragraph 11;
- e. note the current position with regard to funds held by the Wessex Home Improvement Loans as detailed in paragraph 15;
- f. note the progress of individual capital schemes as detailed in Appendix A;
- g. note the total land disposals to registered social landlords as detailed in Appendix B;
- h. note the balance of S106 deposits by developers held in paragraph 13;
- i. note the schemes that were approved prior to 2010, as detailed in Appendix C, and confirmed that all the projects remain in the Capital programme.

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 July 2015 to 30th September 2015.

91. Update report on Yeovil Crematorium (Agenda Item 11)

The Portfolio Holder for the Crematorium confirmed that the transfer of the management arrangements was now complete, consultation on the service provided had taken place with funeral directors and staffing issues would be resolved by Christmas. He recorded his thanks to the Environmental Health Manager and the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) for their assistance in resolving operational and VAT issues.

The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that since management of the crematorium had transferred to SSDC, a number of grounds maintenance and IT issues had come to light which he was supporting to resolve. He said that he was looking at a more flexible approach to working to generate more income and provide a better service to the public.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the crematorium already benefitted from a sinking fund which was paying for the necessary upgrading works.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the report.

92. Monthly News Snapshot (Agenda Item 12)

It was noted that Castle Cary Town Council had written a letter of thanks to the Streetscene Service for their swift clean up of the town following the carnival evening.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted the report.

93. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 13)

In response to a question, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) confirmed that the Motion raised at Council in September to investigate the possibility of two hours free car parking would be part of the Budget update report presented to District Executive in January 2016.

It was also requested that the Government consultation on the Community Right to Bid be circulated to all Councillors for them to respond individually.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;

- Investment in Market Housing – move to Jan 2016
 - Adoption of the revised County Wide Tenancy Strategy – move to Jan 2016
 - Loan to Castle Cary Town Council – remove from plan
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B, with the following additional request:-
- That the Government consultation on the Community Right to Bid be circulated to all Councillors to enable them to respond individually.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

94. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 3rd December 2015 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

95. Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda Item 15)

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).

96. Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision (Confidential) (Agenda Item 16)

The Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change advised that the Feed In Tariff for renewable energy was due to be cut by the Government from 1st January 2016 as take-up for the scheme had been higher than expected. In order to take SSDC energy production up to 85% of usage on the Brympton Way building the additional panels needed to be installed and operating by 1st January 2016, therefore the Interim Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of Council had agreed to authorise the ordering of the panels.

At the conclusion of a short debate, Members were content to note the urgent decision taken.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to note that, according to the provision of Part 3 Section 6(4) of the Constitution, the Acting Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Property and Climate Change:

Agreed to make an urgent decision to authorise the go ahead of a project to install an additional photovoltaic array at Brympton Way offices, to be installed on the extension and council chamber roofs, and including allocation of the funding for the project as outlined in the report.

Reason: To note the urgent decision taken.

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Chairman

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Date