

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Taunton, on Wednesday, 15 February 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr M Adkins, Cllr J Bailey, Cllr A Bown, Cllr R Brown, Cllr P Burridge-Clayton, Cllr Coles, Cllr S Crabb, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Dimmick, Cllr J Dyke, Cllr J Edney, Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr M Fysh, Cllr A Gloak, Cllr A Govier, Cllr D Greene, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr P Ham, Cllr M Healey, Cllr R Henley, Cllr D Hill, Cllr A Horsfall, Cllr J Hunt, Cllr D Huxtable, Cllr C Lawrence (Chairman), Cllr C Le Hardy, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Lock, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr T Napper, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr G Noel (Vice-Chairman), Cllr L Oliver, Cllr J Osman, Cllr J Parham, Cllr N Pearson, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr L Redman, Cllr M Rigby, Cllr D Ruddle, Cllr J Shortland, Cllr H Siggs, Cllr T Venner, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr D Wedderkopp, Cllr J Woodman, Cllr N Woolcombe-Adams and Cllr D Yeomans

Apologies for absence: Cllr J Clayton, Cllr J Denbee and Cllr D Tanswell

256 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

Declarations of Interest were made as set out in Appendix A to these minutes and Members' written notifications of interests were affixed to the Notice board at the back of the Council Chamber for the duration of the meeting.

257 Minutes from the meeting held on 30 November 2016 - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes, including attached Appendices, of the meeting of Council held on 30 November 2016 were signed as a correct record.

258 Chairman's Announcements - Agenda Item 4

(1) The Chairman made reference to Holocaust Memorial Day on 26th January 2017, and thanked Tom Rutland for his work.

(2) The Chairman welcomed the three young people who were accompanying the Leader of the Council as a part of Take Over Day.

(3) The Chairman made reference to the recent death of ex-County Councillor Lt Commander Maurice Ingram.

(4) With the Chairman's permission Cllr David Huxtable and Cllr Dave Loveridge paid tribute to Lt Commander Ingram.

(5) The Chairman made reference to the recent death of ex-County Councillor John Edwards.

(6) With the Chairman's permission Cllr Frances Nicholson paid tribute to Mr Edwards.

259 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 5

(1) Public Questions / Statements / Petitions (under 5000 signatures): Notice was received of questions / statements / petitions regarding:

Public Questions / Statements:

1. Council Budget
From Gordon Czapiewski

Response from Cllr John Osman – Leader of the Council

2. Budget Proposals
From Alan Debenham

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

3. MTFP and Budget Monitoring
From Nigel Behan – Unite

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

4. Medium Term Financial Plan / Learning Disability Social Enterprise /
Homecare
From Liz Payne-Ahmadi

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources / Cllr
William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

5. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Sean Cox

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

6. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Suzanne Matthews

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

7. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Nigel Behan – Unite

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

8. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Paul Kitto

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

9. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Ewa Marcinkowska

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

10. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Jenny Winchester

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

11. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Jeanette Cave

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

12. Learning Disability Provider Service
From Nick Batho

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

13. Stroke Services
From Amanda Broom

Response from Cllr William Wallace – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Full details of the questions given at the meeting and / or in writing following the meeting are set out in Appendix B to these Minutes.

260 **Report of the Head of Finance on the Robustness of the Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves and Balances - Agenda Item 6**

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 6) by the Section 151 (S151) Officer and Director of Finance and Performance, which set out the opinion of the S151 Officer on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculation and the adequacy of reserves as required under Section 25(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

(2) During debate on the item the following issues were raised: funding for the Learning Disability Provider Service; and the legal robustness of the budget.

(3) The recommendations within the report were proposed by Cllr John Osman and seconded by Cllr Harvey Siggs.

(4) The Council RESOLVED by a majority to note that, in the opinion of the Section 151 Officer:

a) “The estimates used in the production of the budget proposal for 2017/18 are adequately robust.”

The County Council further noted the following statement, made on the basis of the assessments contained in this report:

b) “Based on the assessment of the reserves, contingencies and balances, the key financial risks identified, and the thorough process used for developing the Medium Term Financial Plan, I have determined that the level of reserves, contingencies and balances for the 2017/18 financial year is adequate”.

261 **Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Agenda Item 7**

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 6) by the Leader and Cabinet which set out the recommendations to Council arising from the meeting held on 6 February 2017.

(2) The recommendations within the report were proposed by Cllr John Osman and seconded by Cllr Harvey Siggs.

(3) Cllr Osman introduced the section of the report relating to the devolution proposals, highlighting the following points: the strong partnership across the South West region; formally negotiating with central Government; formalising work through the creation of a joint committee; the Heart of the South West's Productivity Plan; and improving the quality of life for Devon and Somerset residents. Cllr Osman further thanked Julian Gale for his work.

(4) During debate on the devolution proposals the following issues were raised: circulation of the 'green paper' on the Productivity Plan; ensuring transparency and accountability; A303 and A358 improvements; elected Majors; working with the Local Enterprise Partnership; the region coming together as one voice; the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner; the County's productivity deficit; affordable housing; and the pay rise awarded to the Heart of the South West LEP Chief Executive.

(5) The Council **RESOLVED** by a majority to adopt the following recommendations:

Devolution the way forward

1. To note the update about the HotSW Combined Authority / devolution deal proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, will have responsibility for developing future 'deal' and combined authority proposals for recommendation to the constituent authorities);
2. To approve the proposals for the HotSW Productivity Plan preparation and consultation proposals (including noting that a Joint Committee, if established, will have responsibility for approving and overseeing the implementation of the Productivity Plan);
3. To agree:
 - (a) 'In principle' to the establishment of a HotSW Joint Committee with a Commencement Date of Friday 1 st September 2017 in accordance with the summary proposals set out in this report;
 - (b) That the 'in principle' decision at (a) above is subject to further recommendation and report to the constituent authorities after the County Council elections in May 2017 and confirmatory decisions to: approve the establishment of the Joint Committee; a constitutional 'Arrangements' document; an 'InterAuthority Agreement' setting out the support arrangements; appoint representatives to the Joint Committee; and appoint an Administering Authority.

(6) Cllr John Osman highlighted the following points regarding the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan: the cut of £120m to the Council's Revenue Support Grant over the past 8 years; the impact of these reductions on service provision ; the need for tough decisions to be made to enable a balanced budget; increasing demand for services; servicing the Council's debts; Council tax has been frozen for 6 of the last 8 years; Somerset has the second lowest Council Tax rate of all rural authorities; the 2% Adult Social Care increase; meeting the Secretary of State; and that the budget proposals had been presented at both Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Cllr Osman further introduced the themed approach to setting the Council's budget; noting: a £1.35m saving from the former SouthWest One contract; reducing the use of agency staff; apprentices; better procurement; sharing services; reducing the number of high cost placements; and transport integration. Cllr Osman commended the budget to the Council, noted that no alternative budget had been proposed, and thanked all officers and Members for their work.

(7) Cllr Harvey Siggs added to the points raised by Cllr Osman, highlighting: the lack of an alternative budget; that £18.1m of savings had to be found; and the importance of robust budget monitoring.

(8) Cllr David Hall introduced the Technology and People (TAP) theme, noting: the importance of using technology to improve productivity and efficiency; the £2m of savings included in the TAP theme; capital investment; and that he was confident this level of saving could be achieved.

(9) Cllr Frances Nicholson introduced the Productivity and Culture theme highlighting: the importance of policies and processes on productivity; and reducing agency staff costs, whilst accepting the requirement for essential Social Workers.

(10) Cllr Harvey Siggs introduced the Commercial and Third Party Spend theme highlighting: the theme includes all Council service areas; savings were to be achieved through procurement, strategic sourcing and contract management; and this theme would save £6m over 4 years.

(11) Cllr Anna Groskop introduced the Stronger Communities theme, noting: the importance of sustainable and empowered communities; managing demand; prevention; and the importance of working in partnership.

(12) Cllr William Wallace introduced the Partnership and Integration theme, noting: exploring opportunities to reduce costs through partnership working; and collaboration with other councils.

(13) Cllr Christopher Le Hardy introduced the service re-design theme, noting: the theme was part of an on-going improvement programme; the commissioning approach; value judgements; and achieving 'better for less'.

(14) Cllr David Fothergill introduced the transport theme, noting: the theme was a sub-set of service redesign; the theme included both adults and children's services; and investment in the Councils vehicle fleet.

(15) Cllr Sam Crabb highlighted his role as the Opposition Spokesman for Resources, noting the following points: the shambolic way central Government have presented budget figures; the budget presented today shows a lack of strategic thinking and decisive decision making; the obligation of all Members to set the Council's budget; the Council had overspent by £13m this financial year; the realisation of proposed savings was becoming more difficult; only 60% of proposed savings were achieved over the past 2 years; service redesign will affect the vulnerable; CAHMS is the lowest funded in England; reducing out of county placements; software systems for Social Workers; increasing the savings target for the Productivity and Culture theme; shared service savings; income generation; and the removal of bus services.

Cllr Crabb further noted that: it was unhelpful that he had been filmed at a recent Cabinet meeting; fake news; the additional grant awarded to Surrey County Council; achieving a better settlement for Somerset; and the lack of progress in Children's Services. Finally Cllr Crabb noted that it was impossible to present an alternative budget as no substantive figures had been presented, and called on all Members to vote against the proposed budget.

(16) Cllr Osman responded to the points raised by Cllr Crabb, noting: no amendments to the budget had been proposed; the need for a new budget setting approach; the improvements in Children's Services; there had been no borrowing over the past 8 years; and servicing the Council's existing debt.

(17) During debate on the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan the following issues were raised: alternative budgets; achieving the proposed savings; locum Social Workers; Step-Up to Social Work training; the importance of 'invest to save'; funding the Council's pension deficit; the role of apprentices; providing Members with full details of the 2017 revenue budget; the role and position of the S151 Officer; contacting CIPFA; the demonstration outside of Shire Hall; funding for the Somerset Rivers Authority; appointments to the Council's Scrutiny Committees; working with Parish Councils; the Northern Inner Distributor Road; the removal of the invest to save budget; 'cost-shunting'; and the risks associated with the themed budget setting approach.

(18) Cllr Osman responded to the points raised in debate, noting: the Somerset Rivers Authority had levered significant funding; risk assessments were included in the paperwork for today's meeting; the role of the S151 Officer; the Council was looking to work with partners including the NHS; and that no Social Workers had left the Council and been re-employed through an employment agency.

(19) Cllr Siggs highlighted that the Council's internal auditors and CIPFA had previously commended the Council's budget setting process.

(20) A named vote was taken regarding the 2017 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan, and the Council **RESOLVED** by a majority vote to adopt

the following recommendations (by 30 votes for to 22 votes against with no abstentions):

2017/18 Revenue Budget and the Medium Term Financial Plan

1. A net revenue budget requirement of £311,772,100 for 2017/18 as shown in Appendix A
2. The 2017/18 savings targets for each Theme as shown in section 4.4 and any linked financial impacts occurring in future years, after having due regard to the potential impacts identified.
3. A Council Tax increase of 3.99% (including 2% for Adult Social Care) giving a Band D value of £1,111.95, resulting in a Council Tax requirement of £214,316,900 (section 7.1 & 7.2) as detailed in Appendix D
4. Continuing the Council Tax precept of £12.84 within the base budget for the shadow Somerset Rivers Authority (representing no rise from 2016/17). This results in a Council Tax requirement of £2,474,800 (section 7.3) as detailed in Appendix D 5. That delegated authority is given to the Cabinet, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, to make appropriate changes to the 2017/18 budget, within the overall envelope of resources agreed by the County Council
5. To delegate powers to the Leader and the Director of Finance to finalise budget proposals and recommendations to Full Council, updated to take into account new information in the Final Local Government Financial Settlement if this is available
6. To continue to campaign for fairer funding for Somerset County Council, to ensure County Plan priorities are fully funded
The County Council is also recommended to note:
7. Whilst the Council is able to present a balanced budget for 2017/18, it is on the basis that all targets included against each MTFP Theme are achieved

That the implementation of specific savings proposals under each theme will be subject to decisions by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Members or Officers in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of Delegation, after having due regards to consultation results and any potential impacts identified.

Votes cast as follows:

For Cllr M Adkins Cllr A Bown Cllr R Brown Cllr P Burridge-Clayton Cllr J Edney	Against Cllr J Bailey Cllr S Coles Cllr S Crabb Cllr H Davies Cllr A Dimmick
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Cllr D Fothergill Cllr M Fysh Cllr A Groskop Cllr D Hall Cllr P Ham Cllr M Healey Cllr D Hill Cllr J Hunt Cllr D Huxtable Cllr C Lawrence Lt Col Le Hardy Cllr M Lewis Cllr T Napper Cllr F Nicholson Cllr G Noel Cllr L Oliver Cllr J Osman Cllr J Parham Cllr D Ruddle Cllr H Siggs Cllr L Vijeh Cllr W Wallace Cllr D Wedderkopp Cllr J Woodman Cllr N Woollcombe-Adams Cllr D Yeomans	Cllr J Dyke Cllr A Gloak Cllr A Govier Cllr D Greene Cllr R Henley Cllr A Horsfall Cllr J Lock Cllr T Lock Cllr D Loveridge Cllr N Pearson Cllr H Prior-Sankey Cllr L Redman Cllr M Rigby Cllr J Shortland Cllr T Venner Cllr A Wedderkopp
Abstained None	

(21) Cllr John Osman introduced the section of the report regarding the appointment of external auditors.

(22) The Council **RESOLVED** by a majority to adopt the following recommendations:

1. Adopt the Treasury Management Strategy (as shown in Section 2 of the report).

Approve the Annual Investment Strategy (as shown in Section 3 of the report) and proposed Lending Counterparty Criteria (attached at Appendix B to the report).

262 **Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information** - Agenda Item 8

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 10) introduced by the Leader of Council that summarised the key decisions taken by the Leader and Cabinet Members between 22 November 2016 and 3 February 2017, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet Meetings on 14 December 2016; 18 January 2017 and 6 February 2017.

(2) Cllr John Osman and Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Alan Dimmick regarding the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

(3) Cllr John Osman responded to a written question from Cllr Sam Crabb regarding future funding for Somerset County Council, and undertook to provide a written response.

(4) Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Cllr Ross Henley regarding household waste recycling centres opening times.

(5) Cllr David Fothergill responded to written questions from Cllr Ross Henley regarding slinky bus services and the Henlade park and ride site, and undertook to provide a written response. Cllr Fothergill further responded to questions asked at the meeting by Cllr Simon Coles regarding the Northern Inner Distributor Road, and Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey regarding a consultation on improvements to the A358.

(6) Cllr Frances Nicholson responded to written questions from Cllr Jane Lock regarding universal services, OFSTED inspections and support services for schools and undertook to provide written responses. Cllr Nicholson further undertook to provide a written response to a question asked at the meeting by Cllr John Parham regarding the creation of multi-academy trusts.

(7) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families at this point in the meeting (Paper 13) detailing key activities and achievements from the last year of those services that fall under his Cabinet responsibilities.

(8) Cllr William Wallace responded to written questions from Cllr Jill Shortland regarding Stroke Services and Cllr Mike Rigby and Cllr Jane Lock regarding the Learning Disability Provide Service.

(9) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Resources at this point in the meeting (Paper 14) detailing key activities and achievements from the last year of those services that fall under his Cabinet responsibilities.

(10) Cllr John Osman responded to a question asked at the meeting by Cllr Terry Napper regarding the status of the village green application for Tor Leisure in Glastonbury, and undertook to provide a written response.

(11) The Council received the Improvement and Transformation in Somerset: report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Improvement at this point in the meeting (Paper 15). Cllr Le Hardy highlighted the considerable on-going work.

263 **Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place - Agenda Item 9**

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 13) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee, Cllr Tony Lock.

264 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health - Agenda Item 10

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 11) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

(2) Cllr Prior-Sankey thanked the Scrutiny for Polices, Adults and Health Vice-Chairman, officers and partners in health

265 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families - Agenda Item 11

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 11) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee, Cllr Leigh Redman.

(2) Cllr Redman thanked officers, governor representatives and the Scrutiny for Polices, Children and Families Vice-Chairman.

266 Report of the HR Policy Committee - Agenda Item 12

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 12) from the Chairman of the HR Policy Committee, Cllr Anna Groskop.

267 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families - Agenda Item 13

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

268 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Resources - Agenda Item 14

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

269 Improvement and Transformation in Somerset: report of the Cabinet Member for Corporate Improvement - Agenda Item 15

The Council considered the report under agenda item 8, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK263 refers.

CHAIRMAN