

Public Document Pack

(County Council - 26 April 2017)

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Taunton, on Wednesday, 26 April 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr M Adkins, Cllr J Bailey, Cllr A Bown, Cllr R Brown, Cllr P Burridge-Clayton, Cllr S Coles, Cllr S Crabb, Cllr H Davies, Cllr A Dimmick, Cllr J Dyke, Cllr J Edney, Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr A Gloak, Cllr A Govier, Cllr D Greene, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr P Ham, Cllr M Healey, Cllr D Hill, Cllr James 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 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 W Wallace, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr J Woodman, Cllr N Woollcombe-Adams and Cllr D Yeomans

Apologies for absence: Cllr J Clayton, Cllr J Denbee, Cllr M Fysh, Cllr R Henley, Cllr A Horsfall, Cllr L Oliver, Cllr D Tanswell, Cllr T Venner, Cllr L Vijeh and Cllr D Wedderkopp

270 **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.

271 **Minutes from the meeting held on 15 February 2017** - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes, including attached Appendices, of the meeting of Council held on 15 February 2017 were signed as a correct record.

272 **Chairman's Announcements**

(1) The Chairman paid respects to Mr David Carter who died recently. He was the Head Teacher at St Bartholomew's First School in Crewkerne. The Chairman noted that she would be writing to Mr Carter's family.

(2) The Chairman paid respects to Mr Brian Cresswell, Taunton's 'man of music', who died recently. The Chairman noted that she would be writing to Mr Cresswell's family.

(3) The Chairman noted the following County Councillors who were not standing for re-election:

- Michael Adkins, Conservative Councillor for Taunton North (first elected: 2015, years of service: 2)
- John Bailey, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Martock (first elected: 2009, years of service: 8)
- Justine Clayton, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Bishops Hull and Taunton West (first elected: 2013, years of service: 4)
- John Denbee, Conservative Councillor for Brent (first elected: 2011, years of service: 6)

- John Dyke, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Crewkerne (first elected: 2001, years of service: 16)
- John Edney, Conservative Councillor for Cannington (first elected: 2001, years of service: 16)
- Marcus Fysh, Conservative Councillor for Coker (first elected: 2013, years of service: 4)
- Alan Gloak, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Glastonbury (first elected: 2001, years of service: 16)
- Dawn Hill, Conservative Councillor for Cheddar (first elected: 2005, years of service: 12)
- Jill Shortland, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Chard South (first elected: 1993, years of service: 24)
- Harvey Siggs, Conservative Councillor for Mendip Hills (first elected: 2005, years of service: 12)
- Danny Wedderkopp, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Rowbarton & Staplegrove (first elected: 2009, years of service: 8)
- Nigel Woolcombe-Adams, Conservative Councillor for Mendip South (first elected: 2013, years of service: 4)
- Derek Yeomans, Conservative Councillor for Curry Rivel & Langport (first elected: 2001, years of service: 16)

273 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

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

Public Questions / Statements:

1. The Future of the recently Transferred Learning Disability Provider Service (LDPS) to Dimensions UK Ltd (Discovery)

From Nigel Behan

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

2. County Farms

From Sue Osborne

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

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

274 Report of the Monitoring Officer - Agenda Item 5

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 5) from the Monitoring Officer, including recommendations from the Standards Committee and the Constitution Committee seeking Council approval for: the proposed amalgamation of the Standards and Constitution Committees; the request that all Members undertake Code of Conduct training; the appointment of Strategic

Finance Managers Martin Gerrish and Martin Young as deputy Section 151 Officers; and to note progress on the review of the Scheme of Members allowances.

(2) The Monitoring Officer informed Council that the proposed amalgamation of the Standards and Constitution Committees would be brought to the Council's May meeting for formal consideration, and further highlighted the excellent response from members to the questionnaire and member interviews undertaken by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel. He passed on the Panel's thanks to the members for this input into the Panel's evidence gathering phase.

(3) The Chairman of the Standards Committee, Cllr Alan Gloak thanked Members of the Committee and officers of the Council. Cllr Gloak further noted it had been a privilege to chair the Standards Committee for 8 years and to be a Member of the Council for the past 16 years.

(4) During debate on the item the following issue was raised: the Independent Remuneration Panel questionnaire and interviews where Cllr Jane Lock paid tribute to the work being undertaken by the Panel.

(5) The recommendations within the report were proposed by Cllr John Osman and seconded by Cllr Alan Gloak.

(6) The Council RESOLVED unanimously to adopt the following recommendations, to:

1. Note the recommendations from the Standards and Constitution Committees for the proposed amalgamation of the two Committees to form a single Constitution and Standards Committee and to refer them to the new Council for consideration in May 2017 – paragraphs 3.1.4(2) and 3.1.5 refer.
2. Agree that all members are requested to undertake the Code of Conduct training being provided as part of the induction of the new Council and that all Group Leaders are asked to encourage their members to do so – section 3.2 refers.
3. Appoint Martin Gerrish and Martin Young, Strategic Managers in Finance, as Deputy Section 151 Officers in accordance with section 3.3 of this report.
4. Note the progress with the review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances which will lead to the recommendation of the adoption of a revised Scheme to Council in July 2017 – section 3.4 of the report and Appendix A refers.

275 Report of the HR Policy Committee - Agenda Item 6

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 6) from the Chairman of the HR Policy Committee seeking Council approval for the revised Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18.

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

(3) Cllr Groskop thanked all Members who had attended meetings of the Committee.

(4) The Council RESOLVED unanimously to approve the revised Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 as recommended by the HR Policy Committee.

276 Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information - Agenda Item 7

(1) The Council considered a report (Paper 7) introduced by the Leader of Council that summarised the key decisions taken by the Leader and Cabinet Members between 4 February 2017 and 13 April 2017, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet Meetings on 20 February 2017, 15 March 2017 and 12 April 2017.

(2) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities 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. Cllr Osman thanked all Members, his Cabinet and all Council officers for their work, and thanked the Chief Executive for his support and guidance

(3) Cllr Osman added to his report, highlighting the following points: the Council's willingness to listen to Somerset's residents; the success of the Glastonbury Access Hub; the return of Contact Centre staff to the Council; over 7000 residents have responded to Council consultations; the importance of sharing information across the public sector; and the work of the Communications Team including Your Somerset, Travel Somerset and the fostering campaign.

(4) The Council received the Annual Report of the Leader of the Council at this point in the meeting (Paper 12) detailing key activities and achievements from the last year of those services that fall under his Cabinet responsibilities.

(5) Cllr Osman further added to his report, highlighting the following points: setting the Council's budget; the Council's vision projects; ensuring the County prospers; the work of the Economic Development Team; the importance of income generation; staff awards; recent OFSTED monitoring visits and the importance of continued Member involvement; Devolution proposals; the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority; and the Hinkley Point C development. In conclusion Cllr Osman noted that the last 4 years had been successful, and that the Council was striving to be excellent in everything it does.

(6) Cllr Jane Lock thanked Cllr Osman, all Council Officers, and the Chairman, and noted the importance of working with all Members.

(7) Cllr Christopher Le Hardy informed Council that the Armed Forces Community Covenant had received a grant of £190k to assist with understanding and promotion of the Armed Forces, bringing Somerset's total grant award to over £600k. Cllr Le Hardy further thanked Council officers, Julian Gale and Chris Phillips for their work.

(8) Cllr David Hall responded to written questions from Cllr Alan Dimmick regarding the Cabinet Member decision Approval to Accept DfT C-ITS Challenge Award, and Cllr Alan Gloak regarding the adoption of a Bee and Natural Pollinators Protection Plan.

(9) Cllr David Hall and Cllr Terry Napper thanked Cllr Gloak for his work as a County Councillor and wished him well in his retirement.

(10) Cllr William Wallace responded to questions asked at the meeting by Cllr Sam Crabb regarding Fiveways Resource Centre, and undertook to provide a written response.

(11) Cllr Harvey Siggs responded to a question asked at the meeting by Cllr Sam Crabb regarding budget monitoring timescales.

(12) Cllr Harvey Siggs highlighted that he had enjoyed his 12 years as a County Councillor.

(13) Cllr William Wallace responded to questions asked at the meeting by Cllr Jane Lock regarding Learning Disability Provider Service staff identification badges, and Cllr Alan Gloak regarding the future of the Beckery Resource Centre, undertaking to provide written responses.

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

277 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health - Agenda Item 8

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 8) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

(2) Cllr Prior-Sankey thanked Cllr John Parham for his work as the Committee Vice-Chairman, and thanked Committee Members and Officers for their work. Cllr Prior-Sankey further noted that it had been a pleasure to chair the Committee.

(3) Cllr John Parham thanked Cllr Prior-Sankey, noted that the Council has responsibility for scrutinising all health services and asked the new Council ensures that members of the Committee receive sufficient training on health services to enable them to scrutinise this complicated area of the Council's responsibilities effectively

(4) Cllr Hugh Davies thanked Members of the Committee for their work, with particular reference to Williton and Minehead hospitals.

278 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Children and Families - Agenda Item 9

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 9) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee, Cllr Leigh Redman.

(2) Cllr Redman thanked officers, Members of the Committee and Cllr David Huxtable for his work as the Committee Vice-Chairman.

279 Annual Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies and Place - Agenda Item 10

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 10) from the Chairman of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee, Cllr Tony Lock.

(2) Cllr Lock thanked officers, Members of the Committee and Cllr Mike Lewis for his work as the Committee Vice-Chairman.

(3) Cllr Mike Lewis thanked Cllr Lock for his non-partisan Chairmanship, and thanked officers for their support.

280 Annual Report of the Audit Committee - Agenda Item 11

(1) The Council received the report (Paper 11) from the Chairman of the Audit Committee, Cllr Dawn Hill.

(2) Cllr Hill noted that it had been a privilege to be the Audit Committee Chairman, and thanked Committee Members, the internal auditors South West Audit Partnership and the external auditors Grant Thornton.

(3) Cllr Dean Ruddle, Cllr Sam Crabb and Cllr Simon Coles thanked Cllr Hill, and Council officers.

281 Annual Report of the Leader of the Council - Agenda Item 12

The Council considered the report under agenda item 7, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK278 refers.

282 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Customers and Communities - Agenda Item 13

The Council considered the report under agenda item 7, Report of the Leader and Cabinet – Items for Information – minute AK278 refers.

283 Leader of the Council's Final Remarks - Agenda Item 14

Cllr John Osman thanked all retiring Members for their work, and offered his best wishes to all Members standing for re-election. Cllr Osman further thanked Cllr Graham Noel for his work as Vice Chairman of the Council, and Cllr Christine Lawrence for her work as Chairman of the Council.

284 Chairman's Final Remarks and Closure - Agenda Item 15

Cllr Christine Lawrence thanked the Monitoring Officer, the County Solicitor, the Chief Executive, and the Vice-Chairman of the Council. Cllr Lawrence noted that: she had attended 157 formal events and had met some wonderful people; the Chairman's Charities had now raised over £50k; and there was now a

Somerset bell at St Mary's Parish Church. Cllr Lawrence highlighted the work of the Council Chaplin's, and offered them her thanks.

CHAIRMAN

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Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall,
Taunton on Wednesday 26 April 2017 at 10:00am

Details of the declarations of interest referred to in Minute AK272 are given below.

Agenda item 2 - Declarations of Interest

Councillors' declarations to record membership of District Councils - as detailed on lists displayed in the Council Chamber - are taken as having been declared by these Councillors to be personal interests in the business of the County Council meeting, and are not declared orally at the meeting.

Further personal interests declared at the meeting:

Cllr John Bailey – as both he and his wife are in receipt of SCC pensions

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APPENDIX B

Meeting of Somerset County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Taunton on
Wednesday 26 April 2017 at 10.00am

Agenda Item 4 - Public Question Time

Details of the questions / statements and petitions referred to in Minute AK275 and responses given at the meeting are given below.

Public Questions / Statements / Public Petitions (under 5000 signatures)

1. The Future of the recently Transferred Learning Disability Provider Service (LDPS) to Dimensions UK Ltd (Discovery)

From Nigel Behan

Please find enclosed some further questions arising from the responses recently provided to our County Council questions (15th February 2017) and Cabinet questions (15th March 2017). I would like to thank Councillor William Wallace for the supply of the Key Performance Indicators for the outsourcing contract of LDPS to Dimensions UK Ltd.

Q1 For comparison can these KPIs be completed for the final 3 months of the In House Service (January- March 2017) so that we can see (a baseline) what better, worse or similar performance looks like after transfer of the service to Dimensions UK Ltd?

Q2 Can the final versions of the pre-transfer Risk Register and Issues Log be also supplied (for the period up to 31st March 2017)?

Q3 What are the “specific circumstances” for terminating the contract with Dimensions UK Ltd?

Q4 What mitigating plans and actions have been considered between SCC and Dimensions UK Ltd (Discovery) to address the recruitment and retention (of staff) problem?

Q5 The Cabinet papers (7th July 2016) for Item 5 contained Appendices C and D which contained exempt information “and...therefore marked as Confidential”. Will the Appendices to that paper now be released so the part published Business Case can be put in context?

Q6 i) How much is SCC “investing” (as indicated in the written responses) in Dimensions UK Ltd (compared to the Financial Forecasts and projected expenditure of the In –House service) for each year of the contract?

ii) Is the financial savings estimate (forecast) after 6 years still (cost if SCC ran the service directly £195m compared to Dimensions UK Ltd cost of £191m) approximately £4m?

These questions were sent in after the deadline for the 15th March Cabinet meeting but are in response to the SCC press release, which appeared in the public domain after midday on Friday 10th March.

<https://somersexnewsroom.com/2017/03/10/cabinet-to-consider-compensation-boost/>

Q7 i) One of the main 'fresh' points is that the sudden appearance of a, previously unknown, compensation fund raises more questions than it answers, e.g. SCC subsidising Dimensions' plans?

ii) Why was this fund deemed necessary in 2016 and why has this remained hidden until less than 3 weeks before the proposed transfer? Why is it being kept a secret from staff until after the proposed transfer date? Were Councillors told about the Compensation Fund and if so at which meeting?

Q8 Does the proposal about a Compensation Fund conform to TUPE and procurement legislation? Please demonstrate how this is met.

Q9 Has this extra funding been factored into the business plan/financial case?

Q10 How can using money that government has set aside for social care be used for compensation and not have a detrimental impact on remaining services & Service Users?

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

Thank you for your questions raised at Full Council on the 26th April - please find below a written response to your questions.

Question 1

We will work to provide this comparison, however this will only be possible where the current KPI and future KPI indicators are either the same or broadly similar.

Question 2

As stated in previous responses, this is not a document that is appropriate to release.

Question 3

These circumstances are expressed as clauses within the contracts and are commercially confidential. In broad terms they cover normal and prudent provisions relating to changes to legislation and provider performance etc.

Question 4

Somerset County Council and Dimensions have listened to staff and trade unions during consultation leading up to transfer. One change that was made, as a result of this, was to ensure that relief workers were engaged on the same terms after transfer as they had before. We have been meeting with Discovery regularly both prior to and now that the transfer has taken place, with recruitment and retention a key part of those conversations. We are well aware of issues around staffing generally, in health and social care, and these are a major consideration within our work on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for Somerset.

Question 5

All information, beyond the detailed breakdown of commercially confidential financial information that was summarised in the public version of the paper, has been released and is therefore already available to put the business case in to context.

In terms of the appendices you have directly referred to:

Appendix C provided an end to end narrative of the procurement process undertaken in order to provide assurance to Cabinet and Scrutiny that the process undertaken was compliant with the Public Procurement Regulations (2015). It contains commercially confidential information about all the organisations that participated in the process and therefore is, and will remain, confidential. For clarity both the production and confidentiality of this document is normal practice in any procurement process undertaken by SCC.

Appendix D provided a detailed breakdown of financial information relating to the contract in addition to the summary provided within the Cabinet paper itself. As such it is commercially confidential and I refer you to the response given to the question that you submitted in July 2016 that stated “Where we have not shared information it relates either to commercial aspects of the Dimensions bid and/or approach to bidding that could adversely affect either the new social enterprise or Dimension’s ability to retain or compete for future work locally and/or nationally given the competitive nature of the market for these services. Included within this commercially confidential information is the detailed cost comparison between the new social enterprise and continuing to provide these services in house as, while we have stated the overall difference, the detailed information would immediately give the new social enterprise’s competitors an advantage in this highly competitive market.” This appendix therefore will remain confidential.

Question 6

As previously stated it is inappropriate to term this as SCC investment and the release of this detailed information would immediately give the new social enterprise’s competitors an advantage in this highly competitive market. Therefore it is, and will remain, commercially confidential.

The estimated total cost has increased following increased pension contributions and further National Living Wage increases. This increase would affect SCC if the service stayed in house so the cost of SCC running the service would also increase. The comparison is therefore still valid.

Question 7

It is misleading to suggest that SCC is “subsidising Dimensions’ plans”. The funding referred to relates to the funding of the actual costs of the organisational transformation that is required to meet SCC’s requirements of the new social enterprise.

The “fund” referred to formed part of overall bid that Dimensions submitted. Details of this aspect of the bid were contained within the confidential papers that were considered by both Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Question 8

In terms of procurement, as previously stated the “compensation fund” referred to formed part of overall bid that Dimensions submitted and is therefore compliant with the procurement regulations. The actions undertaken by the Council meets its TUPE responsibility.

Question 9

The “fund” referred to formed part of overall bid that Dimensions submitted. Details of this aspect of the bid were contained within the confidential papers that were considered by both Cabinet and Scrutiny.

Question 10

As previously stated this relates to the funding of the actual costs of the organisational transformation that is required to meet SCC’s requirements of the new social enterprise. None of the recently allocated additional funding has been used in this process.

2. County Farms

From Sue Osborne

Good morning Councillors and thank you for permitting me to speak to you today.

My name is Sue Osborne. I am the wife of the tenant of Oxenford Farm, one of the farms named in the emergency sales order referred to in your papers. I am also a sitting Conservative SSDC Councillor.

We started our farming career at Lower Sea Farm in 1996 and moved to Oxenford Farm in 2003 on the last 16 year progression tenancy.

In August 2012 John Osman, Leader of SCC, told stakeholders, in response to a question, at a West Somerset Economic Development meeting, that there would be no more farms sold while he was the leader. Further enquiry revealed that this meant specifically no more sales of land on the quantocks.

This year the sale of County Farms is in the news again, making the front page of Farmers Guardian, a national farming newspaper. Why did this happen? I believe it is because that thanks to a change in Government policy, local authorities may use capital receipts to prop up revenue deficits. This authority decided to do more than consider an assets sales drive. It put a tenant on a retained farm on a notice to quit, despite there being no change in policy, as confirmed by your officer at the March 21st Scrutiny meeting; it put four farms under an emergency sales notice, including one whose tenancy was not due to expire till 2018 and those whose tenancies expired in 2018 were handed their notices in Autumn 2016 as opposed to the usual practice of serving notice in the March the year before expiry.

In total some eight farms are due to be disposed of by the end of the 2018/19 financial year. These farms, added to the land and farms already sold, will take the estate dangerously close to the loss of critical mass.

SCC had the Farms re-valued in October 2016, despite having no legal requirement to do so, with dramatic results for those tenants who had intended to buy, making the farms unaffordable.

As a tenant who has been trying to buy part of our farm since 2011, we have been pushed to the back of the queue as FBT tenants were not considered a priority. We have now been put under intense pressure to do a deal, subject to more onerous terms than previous tenant purchasers and having been made subject to this emergency order.

We feel that we are being punished for having been put to the back of the queue and now having to be dealt with in haste; punished for being one of the few remaining full time dairy tenants; punished for investing in the holding to build up a business that the banks will support to purchase the farm, (an aspiration we have had since 2010 when the farm was put on the 'cull' list, as a way of giving us a more secure future) and finally, punished for trying to do the right thing.

In 2013, I went to see the leader, accompanied by Cllr. Mike Lewis, to try and persuade SCC to adopt a more flexible approach to the end of tenancies and avoid this inhumane cliff edge scenario for our tenant farmers. Our efforts were unsuccessful and I felt that we had wasted our time.

How does putting farm tenants in a position where they will lose their homes, businesses and way of life, square with a Conservative manifesto pledge to promote and protect the rural way of life?

At the next scrutiny meeting a paper is being presented about this A List B List policy as retained Farms and land have been sold as well as those on the sell list.

What is needed is a root and branch, member led, cross party, Task and Finish review of the whole County Farms Estate and its Governance, which currently leaves a lot to be desired. No information should be withheld from members, unlike the Feb 2014 scrutiny Task and Finish where information was considered 'too sensitive' for members eyes. Outside bodies and interested stakeholders, e.g. NFU, TFA, CLB, YFC, should be consulted. Examples should be sought of best practice from other successful authorities,

e.g., Cambridge County Council and Dorset CC to name but two. Above all, there is need to gather evidence from a wider stakeholder group, including tenants, not just officers.

Councillors, this could be your last opportunity to save this estate. Once an asset is sold it can never be replaced and when you have no farms left to sell, what then?

The procedure of ending tenancies is this way, with no flexibility whatsoever, is no longer fit for purpose, and is a breach of our human rights.

Thank you for your time and for listening to me.

Response from Cllr Harvey Siggs – Cabinet Member for Resources

The approach to the County Farm estate is in line with the policy of this County Council. That is to dispose of our holdings in a managed way that delivers best commercial value to the County Council and the taxpayers of Somerset. The policy was last refreshed in 2010. This included the identification of holdings for immediate disposal and holdings that would be retained future sale, typically where they were strategically located for example in potential development areas. Since this Administration took power in 2009 we have generated capital receipts of over £35m and at the same time enabled sixteen tenants to buy some or all of their farms.

The farms have been valued to ensure the sales reflect market value. Over time there will be fluctuations in prices, reflecting a number of external and market factors. Most significantly has been a general increase in land values in recent years. We will continue to make sure our valuations are up to date and reflect the market so we can maximise the financial return the County Council. Similarly in relation to tenancy notices, we ensure at all times that as landlord we act with the prevailing legislation.

The rule change that has allowed Councils to use capital receipts for a wider range of purposes was welcomed by this Administration, but has not changed our overall strategy towards County Farms. We are not on an asset sales drive, but we do continue to generate capital receipts on surplus land and property to support our capital investment programme and more recently to invest in transformation initiatives.

In regard to your suggestion about a review of the County Farm policy, that will be a matter for the new Administration so I am unable to make any commitment on their behalf.

APPENDIX C

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

Written responses to questions to Cabinet Members

The following questions were asked of the Cabinet Members during the County Council meeting, who undertook to give written responses:

Written questions:

1. Decision - Approval to Accept DfT C-ITS Challenge Fund Award

From Cllr Alan Dimmick

Members will be aware of the key decision taken on 21/03/2017 “approval to accept DfT C-ITS challenge Fund Award.

Implement the Energy Efficient Intersection Project.

This is a result of Directive of European Union 2010/40/E.U. 7th July 2010

As a result of this directive 7 pilot schemes introduced across the EU involving 600 plus vehicles and 1,200 drivers (a very small sample) as a result working groups (9 in total) set up to examine outcomes, these published in the FINAL REPORT (JAN 16) of the C-ITS PLATFORM.

The decision to proceed is based on appendix A. Page 12 – Subjective User Feedback “findings used to build a business case” This is to be set against the EU final Report which states “there is no business case” only business models “which actors can then find there interest presented in a convincing way”

Many key findings within the EU Final Report contradict Appendix A-example- “priority schemes (which this scheme is) can cause an increase in delays in the wider network” The claim that CO2 emissions will reduce by up to 10% set against report findings that CO2 emissions EXPECTED to drop by 1.2% (one point two per cent) by 2030. It is to be noted that in a congested state NO BENEFIT ACHIEVED. In the final report it states that most savings achieved through “Intersection Related Services” (applicable in this case)

Parking Information (not applicable in this case)

Smart Routing (not applicable in this case)

As this scheme is a “pilot” and data is to be collected then it must be monitored to encompass the effects on the wider road network, air quality must also be monitored before and after the implementation of this scheme at a very local level. Question – who will pay for all of this work. Failure to carry out a full assessment will result in meaningless data being collected.

To base a decision on a commercial (biased) report brings the integrity of this Council into question.

Response from Cllr David Hall – Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment Policy

Thank you for your interest in this pilot project. Turning to your specific question, the appropriate monitoring of the success of the project will be funded from the DfT grant at no cost to the Council, and the system will only continue to be used if it demonstrates clear benefits.

2. Bee and Natural Pollinators Protection Plan

From Cllr Alan Gloak

For the benefit and protection of fruit growers and farmers across the county will Somerset county council consider adopting and implementing a bee and natural pollinators protection plan, based on a framework provided by Friends on the earth , that has already been adopted by Cornwall , Devon, Dorset and Bristol ?

Response from Cllr David Hall – Cabinet Member for Business, Inward Investment Policy

The Council acknowledges the benefits to all pollinators and the wider biodiversity of the county of reducing or eliminating the use of neonicotinoids (a class of neuro-active insecticide chemically similar to nicotine and reportedly particularly harmful to the bee population). I will ask the County Ecologist to liaise with key stakeholders within the County Council such as property and highway maintenance teams regarding a 'Pollinators' Action Plan'.

Questions asked at the meeting:

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Sam Crabb with a response to the questions asked at the meeting regarding Fiveways Resource Centre.

Thank you for your questions raised at Full Council on the 26th April, I have set out further to the comments I made at Council the detailed answers below.

(1) Why have you picked out Fiveways as one of the centres marked for closure.

As part of the transformation of day services we have asked Discovery to spend time speaking to people who use our current day services, their families and staff about their experiences. We want people to tell us what they like about the current services and also to say what things they would like to do differently in future. We do not have any specific plans to close any centre at this point. Any plans to close a specific centre would only arise after the discussions I mentioned above have happened and any specific consultation has taken place.

(2) Do you think that Fiveways is well used by people, from Wincanton, Chard, Crewkerne, Martock and Yeovil.

I know from my visit to Fiveways that people do attend the centre from a number of locations across the county. We will obviously be speaking to people from all these areas as part of the discussions referred above. I am anxious that we are able to support people more in future in their local areas and reduce what for some people can be a long bus journey though clearly any changes will as I indicated in answer 1 only occur after the appropriate discussions and consultations take place.

(3) How do you feel about the families and carers who rely on Fiveways for support? What impact is uncertainty having on these families?

I know from the discussions I have had with families and carers the importance of day time activities. The importance is both in relation to respite for families as well as the activity for the person themselves.

(4) Mel Lock (SCC) is suggesting that the disco is moved elsewhere. But families and carers say it should stay at Fiveways.

Any plans for changes will be developed as part of the discussions mentioned in my answer to question 1.

(5) We have clients who come to Fiveways in wheelchairs. What future is for them ? When Fiveways is suitable for their needs and a meeting place for them?

I do understand the importance of ensuring all clients have access to day time activities and where they have a physical disability need that this is met. We do want to ensure there are improvements to the availability of 'changing places' so that individuals who require this level of support can do so within communities.

(6) How do you feel about the dark cloud hanging over the staff and clients heads and the effect this is having.

I do recognise the anxieties that staff are experiencing, it is important that staff get the answers about their futures as soon as is possible. I know that Discovery has started the necessary discussions with Unions and will be speaking to staff as soon as possible.

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Jane Lock with a response to the question asked at the meeting regarding staff identification badges.

As you will appreciate as a new organisation Discovery has been putting in place all of the necessary infrastructure including having the appropriate name badges. Staff will have a clearly identifiable 'Discovery' badge shortly as design and production processes are finalised.

In the meantime staff are able to self-service and get a name badge though the Dimensions facility though clearly this identifies the holder as Dimensions.

Cllr William Wallace to provide Cllr Alan Gloak with a response to the question asked at the meeting regarding the future of the Beckery Resource Centre

Thank you for your question at Full Council regarding the Beckery Centre and specifically if there any changes occurring there. I have checked and as I expected there is no changes occurring specifically there. Obviously the service has as part of the LDPS recently transferred to Discovery the Social Enterprise so will have gone through that change.

You will be aware from my response to the questions from Cllr Sam Crabb that 'Discovery' would be working with individuals to develop a clear plan for the future day service offer. Until that piece of work has been completed no specific or significant changes will occur.

You will have heard me recognise and appreciate the anxiety that people are feeling as they obviously want answers whether those be customers or staff but it is really important that the necessary engagement and consultation takes place before any change is implemented.