

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Taunton, on Wednesday 29 November 2017 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr C Aparicio Paul, Cllr M Best, Cllr A Bown, Cllr A Broom, Cllr P Burridge-Clayton (Vice-Chair), Cllr M Caswell, Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr J Clarke, Cllr S Coles, Cllr A Dance, Cllr H Davies, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr B Filmer, Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr A Govier, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr P Ham, Cllr M Healey, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr James Hunt, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr D Huxtable, Cllr M Keating, Cllr A Kendall, Cllr C Lawrence, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr J Lock, Cllr T Lock, Cllr D Loveridge, Cllr T Munt, Cllr T Napper, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr G Noel, Cllr J Parham, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr M Pullin, Cllr F Purbrick, Cllr L Redman, Cllr B Revans, Cllr M Rigby, Cllr N Taylor, Cllr G Verdon, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr W Wallace (Chair), Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr J Williams, Cllr R Williams and Cllr J Woodman

25 **Apologies for Absence** - Agenda Item 1

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr L Oliver, Cllr D Ruddle and Cllr J Thorne.

26 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

Members' written notifications of interests were affixed to the Notice Board at the back of the Council Chamber for the duration of the meeting

27 **Minutes from the meeting held on 19 July 2017** - Agenda Item 3

The Minutes, including attached Appendices, of the meeting of Council held on 19 July 2017 were signed as a correct record.

28 **Chair's Announcements** - Agenda Item 4

The Chair informed members of the recent death of former County Councillor Lady Shirley Winchilsea who was the Member for Castle Cary division between 1993 and 1997. Cllr J Lock paid a personal tribute to her as she was a friend and said she would be sadly missed.

The Chair informed members of the visits he had made between July and October and thanked the Vice-Chair for attending those events he was unable to.

29 **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. Tax Avoidance

From Andrew Lee

Response from Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council

2. Corporation Tax

From Andrew Lee

Responses from Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council

3. Insourcing services

From Nigel Behan, Unite

Responses from Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council

4. Library Service Redesign

From Nigel Behan, Unite

Response from Cllr David Hall, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources

5. Train service from Taunton to Minehead

From Nigel Bray, Secretary, Railfuture Severnside

Response from Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

6. Community Train Service from Taunton to Minehead

From David Latimer, Minehead Rail Link Group

Response from Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

7. Transport provisions

From Melissa Whittaker

Response from Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

8. Taunton Park and Ride

From John Hassall, Chairman Bus Users Group, Severnside Branch

Response from Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

9. Family Support Services

From Nigel Behan, Unite

Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson, Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Cllr Christine Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

10. Children's Centres

From Katherine See

Response from Cllr Frances Nicholson, Cabinet Member for Children and Families

11. Hinkley B station

From Theo Simon

Response from Cllr Christine Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing

12. Learning Disability Service

From Nigel Behan, Unite

Response from Cllr David Huxtable, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care

13. Learning Disability Service

- a) From Ewa Marcinkowska
- b) Sean Cox
- c) Cheryl Freeman
- d) Paul Kitto

Responses from Cllr David Huxtable, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

14. Chair's Schedule

From Campbell Main

Response from Cllr William Wallace, Chairman of the Council

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

30 Report of the Leader and Cabinet - for decision - Agenda Item 5

- (1) The Council considered a report by the Leader and Cabinet which set out the recommendation to Council regarding the establishment of a Heart of the South West Joint Committee.
- (2) The recommendation was proposed by Cllr David Fothergill and seconded by Cllr Jane Lock.
- (3) The Council RESOLVED by majority vote to:
 - 1. Approve the recommendation of the HotSW Leaders (meeting as a shadow Joint Committee) to form a Joint Committee for the Heart of the South West;
 - 2. Approve the Arrangements and Inter-Authority Agreement (subject to 10 below) documents set out in appendices A and B of the report for the establishment of the Joint Committee with the commencement date of Monday 22nd January 2018;
 - 3. Appoint the Council's Leader - Cllr David Fothergill - and the Deputy Leader - Cllr David Hall - as the Council's named representative and substitute named representative on the Joint Committee;

4. Appoint Somerset County Council as the Administering Authority for the Joint Committee for a 2 year period commencing 22nd January 2018;
5. Approve the transfer of the remaining joint devolution budget to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee for the remainder of 2017/18 financial year subject to approval of any expenditure by the Administering Authority;
6. Approve an initial contribution of £10,500 for 2018/19 to fund the administration and the work programme of the Joint Committee, noting that any expenditure will be subject to the approval of the Administering Authority;
7. Agree that the key function of the Joint Committee is to approve the Productivity Strategy (it is intended to bring the Strategy to the Joint Committee for approval by February 2018);
8. Authorise the initial work programme of the Joint Committee aimed at the successful delivery of the Productivity Strategy;
9. Agree the proposed meeting arrangements for the Joint Committee including the timetable of meetings for the Joint Committee as proposed in para 2.14.of the report.
10. Agree the following amended paragraph 11.5 of Appendix B of the report (the inter-authority agreement) as follows:
11.5 All press releases and public statements to be sent out on behalf of the Joint Committee shall be the responsibility of the press office of the Administering Authority.

(4) The Council then considered a report by the Leader and Cabinet which set out the recommendation to Council regarding the Treasury Management mid-year report arising from the meeting held on 15 November.

(5) The recommendation was proposed by Cllr David Fothergill and seconded by Cllr David Hall.

(6) The Council RESOLVED by majority vote to endorse the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2017-18.

31 **Report of the Monitoring Officer – for decision – Agenda Item 6**

(1) The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer which set out recommendations for a revised County Councillor DBS checks policy.

(2) The Monitoring Officer explained that he had been asked by the Constitution and Standards Committee in October to present a report to the Council to revisit the policy with a view to requiring all members to be DBS checked. This was timely given the continuing emphasis on safeguarding and an assessment of DBS policies of other councils in relation to members.

(3) The recommendations were proposed by Cllr David Fothergill and seconded by Cllr Mike Rigby.

(4) The Council RESOLVED unanimously that the Council's existing policy be extended to provide from today:

- a. An extension of the current mandatory requirement to have Enhanced DBS checks without barred list checks to: all Cabinet members; Junior Cabinet Members; members of the Adult and Children & Families Scrutiny Committees; members of the Adoption and Foster Panels; members of the Corporate Parents Board; and Members appointed to Panels or working groups relating to education or adult social care services.
- b. That all other members and co-opted members are required to undergo a Basic DBS check.
- c. That DBS checks required under (a) and (b) above will be carried out by the Council immediately following each Council election to ensure that such checks are renewed on a quadrennial basis.
- d. That the Monitoring Officer maintains a register of approved applications.

32 Report of the HR Policy Committee – for decision – Agenda item 7

- (1) The Council considered a report from the HR Policy Committee which set out recommendations for the Staff Pay Award 2018/19.
- (2) The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Anna Groskop and seconded by Cllr Mandy Chilcott.
- (3) The Council RESOLVED to note that the Committee shares the concerns about the impact of the pay freeze followed by low pay rises for local authority staff. However, the Committee is clear that the national pay bargaining mechanism is still relevant for Somerset and has not made any recommendations for changes to the current pay determination arrangements.

19 Requisitioned Items - Agenda Item 8

National Joint Council Pay to Councils

- (1) Cllr Mark Healey declared a personal interest as he was a representative on the National Joint Council.
- (2) The Council considered a requisitioned item on National Joint Council Pay to Councils proposed by Cllr Leigh Redman and seconded by Cllr Liz Leyshon.
- (3) Cllr Redman introduced the motion and requested a named vote on this issue. The following points were highlighted: for most workers in local government and schools pay and conditions were determined by the National Joint Council; on average across the country, NJC basic pay had fallen by 21% in real terms since 2010, NJC workers had a three year pay freeze from 2010-2012 and have received only 1% annually since then.
- (4) During debate the following issues were raised: the matter had been looked at by the HR Policy Committee, responsibility to the council and employees to acknowledge the problem, concern that NJC pay should not fall further behind other parts of the public sector.

- (5) A named vote was taken regarding the motion and the Council RESOLVED not to adopt the item on National Joint Council Pay to Councils with 20 votes in favour, 29 against, and 2 abstentions.

Votes cast as follows:

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| <p>For</p> <p>Cllr Best Cllr Broom Cllr Clarke Cllr Coles Cllr Dance Cllr Davies Cllr Dimery Cllr Govier Cllr John Hunt Cllr Kendall Cllr Leyshon Cllr J Lock Cllr T Lock Cllr Loveridge Cllr Munt Cllr Prior-Sankey Cllr Redman Cllr Revans Cllr Rigby Cllr Wedderkopp</p> | <p>Against</p> <p>Cllr Aparicio Paul Cllr Bown Cllr Burridge-Clayton Cllr Caswell Cllr Chilcott Cllr Filmer Cllr Fothergill Cllr Fraschini Cllr Hall Cllr Ham Cllr Hewitt-Cooper Cllr James Hunt Cllr Huxtable Cllr Keating Cllr Lawrence Cllr Lewis Cllr Napper Cllr Nicholson Cllr Noel Cllr Parham Cllr Pullin Cllr Purbrick Cllr Taylor Cllr Verdon Cllr Vijeh Cllr Wallace Cllr J Williams Cllr R Williams Cllr Woodman</p> |
| <p>Abstained</p> <p>Cllr Groskop Cllr Healey</p> | |

Mental Health Challenge Pledge

- (1) The Council considered a requisitioned item on the Mental Health Challenge Pledge proposed by Cllr Christine Lawrence and seconded by Cllr Leigh Redman.
- (2) Cllr Lawrence introduced the item and the following points were highlighted: 1 in 4 Somerset residents will experience a mental health problem in any given year, it is predicted that depression will be the second most common health condition worldwide by 2020 and mental ill health currently represents 23% of the total burden of ill health in the UK, the mental health challenge

recognises that local authorities have a key role in improving mental health in their communities and the independent Mental Health Taskforce called for local councils to have a member champion for mental health.

(3) During the debate the following issues were raised: opportunity to raise awareness, around half of the people who experience mental health issues have developed these before 14 years of age, Mental Health had been on the agenda for the Youth Parliament, affected everybody, tribute was paid to the professionals who supported those with mental health problems, it was hoped the mental health champions would work with other local authority champions in the area.

(4) The Council RESOLVED:

- To sign the Local Authorities' Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Approved Mental Health Professional Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds.
- To commit to appoint two elected members as 'mental health champions' across the Council; one to focus on adult mental health and one to focus on children and young people in Somerset.
- To delegate authority to the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board to appoint the mental health champions referred to above.
- To identify a member of the Public Health staff (Louise Finnis) within the council to act as a 'Lead Officer' to support the Mental Health Champions
- To ensure the Health and Wellbeing Board receives updates from the Champions, at least annually

The Council also RESOLVED to:

- Support positive mental health in our community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces
- Work to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community
- Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs
- Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community
- Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health

34 **Report of the Leader and Cabinet - Items for Information** - Agenda Item 9

(1) The Council considered a report that summarised the key decisions taken by the Leader and Cabinet Members and officers between 8 July and 15 November 2017, together with the items of business discussed at the Cabinet Meetings on 16 August, 27 September, 18 October and 15 November 2017.

- (2) Cllr David Fothergill responded to a written question from Cllr Liz Leyshon regarding the Vision for Somerset.
- (3) The Council received the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing (Agenda Item 13) which highlighted key activities and achievements of the past year within these areas.
- (4) Cllr Anna Groskop responded to a written question from Cllr Amanda Broom regarding Cresta Pool in Chard.
- (5) Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Cllr Simon Coles regarding the Council budget for 2017/18. Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey requested more detail of the proposals for scrutiny meetings ahead of the decision meetings for the budget.
- (6) Cllr David Hall responded to a written question from Cllr Simon Coles regarding accommodation allowances.
- (7) Cllr Frances Nicholson responded to written questions from Cllr Jane Lock regarding Children's Social Care, Childcare Funding, Early Years and Family Support Services. There was some discussion regarding consultation regarding Children's Centres.
- (8) Cllr Anna Groskop then responded to a written question from Cllr Tessa Munt regarding the Learning Disability Service.
- (9) There was some further debate about the A358 expressway and Junction 25 of the M5 and having a coordinated programme, road improvements on A39 and listening to the concerns of local residents, economic prosperity that will Hinkley C will bring, lack of use of Park and Ride Service in Taunton on Saturdays.

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

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

(1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Polices, Adults and Health Committee Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey.

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

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

37 Report of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee – Agenda Item 12

(1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Cllr Tony Lock.

(2) Cllr Adam Dance asked about the current list of county farms for sale and was informed that he would receive a written response.

38 **Annual Report of the Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant-**
Agenda Item 13

- (1) The Council received and noted a report from the Chair of the Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership Cllr Rod Williams.
- (2) Cllr Andy Kendall asked about identifying veterans in the county and was informed he would receive a written response.

(The meeting ended at 1.10 pm)

CHAIR