

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held in the Council Chamber, Shire Hall, Taunton on Wednesday 17 July 2019 at 10.00 am

Present: Present: Cllr M Best, Cllr A Bown, Cllr A Broom, Cllr M Caswell, Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr S Coles, Cllr A Dance, Cllr H Davies, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr B Filmer, Cllr D Fothergill, Cllr G Fraschini, Cllr A Govier, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr D Hall, Cllr P Ham, Cllr James 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 G Noel, Cllr L Oliver, Cllr J Parham, Cllr C Paul, Cllr F Purbrick, Cllr L Redman, Cllr B Revans, Cllr M Rigby, Cllr N Taylor, Cllr J Thorne, Cllr G Verdon, Cllr L Vijeh, Cllr W Wallace, Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr J Williams, Cllr R Williams and Cllr J Woodman

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

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr J Clarke, Cllr P Clayton, Cllr M Healey, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr T Napper, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr H Prior-Sankey, Cllr M Pullin, and Cllr D Ruddle.

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

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

148 **Minutes from the Council meeting held on 15 May 2019** - Agenda Item 3

(1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2019 were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair of the meeting.

149 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

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

1. Climate Change

From Nigel Behan

Response from Cllr David Hall, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning and Community Infrastructure

2. 5G Rollout

From Louise Thomas

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

3. House of Commons Transport Committee Bus services in England outside London (May 2019)

From Nigel Behan

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

4. Supporting Vulnerable People

From Eva Bryczkowski

Response from Cllr Christine Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Health and Well-Being

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.

150 Chair's Announcements - Agenda Item 5

- (1) The Chair informed members of the visits he had made in May, June and July and thanked the Vice-Chair for attending those events he was unable to.
- (2) He encouraged councillors to attend the forthcoming Taunton Flower Show at Vivary Park.
- (3) He took the opportunity to formally thank Julian Gale, Partnership Governance Manager, who was the former Monitoring Officer for the Council for his 42 years of service to the council and recognised the significant contribution he made.
- (4) The Chair invited other members who wished to add their personal thanks.
- (5) Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council, said it was a sad day to say goodbye to Julian as he had always been on hand to help. He said the councillors would miss him and he wanted to formally recognise the work he had done with partner authorities particularly fundamentally bringing together the Heart of the South West Joint Committee. He thanked Julian for his sound knowledge and clear and concise response and said he had been an excellent public servant for the council.
- (6) Cllr Jane Lock, Leader of the Opposition, said she had been a county councillor for 32 years and Julian had been there for all that time. She said he had worked terribly hard for the people of Somerset and tried hard to mediate on many occasions. She wished him a wonderful retirement.
- (7) Cllr Andrew Govier, former Leader of the Labour group, added his best wishes on behalf of the Labour group and said during his 20 years as a councillor, Julian had offered sound advice on many occasions. He had been unflappable and had put things into perspective.
- (8) Cllr Hugh Davies also wished Julian a happy retirement and paid tribute to his hard work.
- (9) Cllr Martin Dimery said he had found Julian very cooperative and helpful and owed him a debt of gratitude.

- (10) The Chair summed up the comments and said he welcomed, admired and respected Julian's governance advice, he would leave a gap at the council and formally presented him with a book of Somerset, signed by the councillors. Julian thanked the Chair and Councillor for their comments.

151 Report of the Leader and Cabinet – for decision - Agenda Item 6

- (1) The Council considered a report by the Leader and Cabinet which set out a recommendation to Council regarding the Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2018-19.
- (2) Cllr Fothergill told members that despite facing a projection of £40m in debt that with careful managing of finances that this had been avoided. In addition, £5m had been paid off in loans. He paid tribute to the work of Principal Investment Officer Alan Sanford for his work on treasury management and he proposed the recommendation on the report.
- (3) Cllr Liz Leyshon seconded the recommendation also paying tribute to Mr Sanford's work.
- (4) The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the Annual Treasury Management Outturn Report 2018/19 as set out in the attached report and its appendices.

152 Report of the Monitoring Officer – for decision – Agenda Item 7

- (1) The Council considered a report from the Monitoring Officer regarding appointments to the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Joint Scrutiny Committee, Appointment of the Director of Adult Social Services and the Appointment of the Deputy Section 151 Officer.
- (2) Cllr Fothergill highlighted the importance of the Heart of the South West LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee and thanked all who took part and held the LEP to account. He welcomed Jason Vaughan, newly appointed Strategic Finance manager as a Deputy Section 151 Officer and was delighted to appoint Mel Lock to the role of Director of Adult Social Services with effect from 1 August 2019.
- (3) The Leader paid tribute to the departing Director of Adult Social Services, Stephen Chandler, and said he had moved the council into new territory, and he was grateful for his work and would be sorry to see him go. He thanked him for his role in raising the problems facing adult social services at a national level.
- (4) Other councillors also thanked Mr Chandler for his efforts during his time at the council.
- (5) The Council **RESOLVED** unanimously:

2.1 Appointment to Heart of the South West LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee

To approve the appointment of Cllr A Bown, Cllr M Lewis, Cllr S Coles and Cllr R Williams to the LEP Joint Scrutiny Committee (see section 3.1 below).

2.2 Appointment of Director of Adult Social Services

To appoint Mel Lock (Adults Services Operations Director) to the role of Director of Adult Social Services with effect from 1st August 2019 (see section 3.2 of this report).

2.3 Appointment of Deputy Section 151 Officer

To appoint the post and postholder of Strategic Finance Manager, currently held by Jason Vaughan, as a Deputy Section 151 Officer (see section 3.3 of this report).

153 Requisitioned Items – Parental Leave Policy – Agenda Item 8

- (1) The Chair invited Cllr David Fothergill to present and propose the requisitioned item about Parental Leave Policy for County Councillors.
- (2) Cllr Fothergill highlighted the importance of supporting parental leave and explained this had been adopted by other authorities. He hoped this would encourage more people into politics.
- (3) Cllr Leigh Redman seconded the recommendations and hoped this would attract more younger people to become county councillors.
- (4) The Council **RESOLVED** by a majority vote to adopt a Parental Leave Policy for elected Members and requested that the Constitution & Standards Committee consider the attached draft policy proposals on Parental Leave. It further authorised the Monitoring Officer to consult with the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel on the draft policy and for that Panel to identify any potential implications and recommendations for the Council to consider in relation to Member allowances.

154 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 4 May 2019 and 8 July 2019, together with items of business discussed at Cabinet meetings on 10 June 2019 and 8 July 2019.
- (2) Cllr Fothergill presented the report as read.
- (3) Cllr John Woodman responded to a written question from Cllr Leyshon regarding Major Road Network Schemes in Somerset.
- (4) He was also asked questions by Cllr Rigby regarding plans for the M5/A38 corridor from Highways England, and Cllr Davies regarding tree cutting along The Avenue in Minehead.

- (5) Cllr Woodman presented his annual Cabinet Member report for Highways and Transport covering the key activities and achievements of the past year and looking ahead to the coming months. Several key policy documents including the Road Safety Strategy and the Somerset Bus Strategy had been produced, officers had also undertaken a consultation on a rail strategy for Somerset and worked alongside Somerset West and Taunton Council on a new transport strategy for Taunton. The major schemes programme had progressed including the completion of the Yeovil Wester Corridor in June 2019, work at junction 25 was underway and due to be completed in March 2021. There had been continued investment in the highway network through the structural maintenance programme.
- (6) Cllr Lawrence responded to a written question from Cllr Redman regarding Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority's recent consultation.

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

155 Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport – Agenda Item 10

This was taken under agenda item 9.

156 Annual Report of the Audit Committee

- (1) The Chair of the Audit Committee, Cllr Paul presented the annual report to Council informing members of the work of the committee in the previous financial year and to note the Committee's opinion on the standard of governance, risk management and internal audit in place within the county council.
- (2) She particularly highlighted the value for money tracker which was reported on at each meeting, regular reports from auditors and praised the technical support to the committee which had been of the highest quality. There would be an increased emphasis on risk management going forward. Cllr Verdon was thanked for her work as Vice Chair as well as the supporting officers.
- (3) Cllr Leyshon and Cllr Fothergill offered their thanks to the committee.

157 Report of the Scrutiny Committee for Policies, Adults and Health – Agenda item 12

- (1) The Council received and noted the report from the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee. The Committee had discussed a number of issues including the Somerset CCG Finance Update, South Western Ambulance Service Trust Performance Report, Somerset Oral Health Update, Fit for My Future, Intensive Dementia Support Service, Adult Social Care Performance and Community Hospitals.

158 Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - Agenda Item 13

- (1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee Cllr Leigh Redman. The main focus of the work was on the outcomes arising from the Ofsted Inspection and ensuring the delivery of the new Children and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP). Other issues discussed included SEND update, Governor Services, Elective Home Education, Somerset Children's Trust, Family Support Service and Self-Harm.
- (2) Cllr Redman invited members to attend the committee meetings.

159 Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, and Place Committee - Agenda Item 14

- (1) The Council received and noted the report from the Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place Committee Cllr Anna Groskop. Issues covered at the meetings included West Somerset Opportunities Area Programme, Hinkley Point C Community Fund, Rights of Way (RoW) Service, Council's revenue budget.
- (2) She reminded members that they could attend the committee meetings.

(The meeting ended at 11.34am)

CHAIR of the Council