

Public Document Pack

CHAIR'S SCHEDULE AND MEETING BUSINESS PLAN

County Council Meeting – Wednesday 22 January 2020 (10.00am)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE **Guide Time: 10.01am**

Cllrs Simon Coles, Christine Lawrence, Dave Loveridge Mike Pullin,

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST **Guide Time: 10.02am**

The County Solicitor will read out any prejudicial interests that have been declared by Members. All personal interest forms will be displayed in the chamber.

Members are reminded that if any business of the Council relates to or affects a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest which you have declared you should disclose it at the meeting not later than the start of the consideration of the business in which you have an interest or (if later) the item at which the interest becomes apparent to you and you should leave the room whilst the business is being considered.

3. MINUTES **Guide Time: 10.03am**

To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes together with the Appendix attached of the Council meeting held on 17 July 2019, and if agreed, the Chair will sign the Minutes as a correct record.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME **Guide Time: 10.10am**

Public Questions / Statements

Note: The questions / statements / public petitions submitted by each member of the public are detailed in ***Annex A to this Schedule.***

Chair to then invite all public speakers registered to address the Council. Each speaker reminded that they have up to 3 minutes to make any key points and to try and not repeat points made by other speakers on the same matter. Chair to highlight that every member has access to the statements and questions that have been submitted and therefore speakers may wish to summarise their key points and focus their available time to put their question(s) to the Council.

5. For information: **Guide Time: 10.45am**

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair's announcements covers information regarding visits made between July and December 2019 and January 2020.

6. **For decision:**

Guide Time: 10.55am

REPORT OF THE LEADER AND CABINET – FOR DECISION

Item 6 - to be introduced by Cllr David Fothergill – Leader of the Council

To consider the report with recommendations from the Leader of the Council, arising from the Cabinet's meeting held on 13 November and 18 December 2019.

Climate Emergency Framework

Chair to invite Cllr David Hall to refer to the report (set out in Paper A on pages 33-75) considered at the Cabinet meeting in December 2019 setting out the partnership work being taken forward with district councils to consult and develop a Climate Emergency Strategy for approval at the County Council meeting in July 2020.

Chair to highlight that this is a report for information, therefore:

The Council is asked to note the progress and work being undertaken.

Investment Strategy

The recommendations set out in Paper B on page 76 to be proposed by Cllr Fothergill, seconded by Cllr Leyshon, debated and voted upon as detailed below.

Following debate the Council will be asked by the Chair to vote upon:

Investment Strategy – see Paper B

The Council is asked to agree to:

- 1. Build on its current Treasury Management investment activities to generate higher returns, protect against inflationary risks, sustaining a prudent balance of risk and reward.**
- 2. Pro-actively consider options for further investing in existing Council owned property to optimise the value from these assets.**
- 3. Consider other investment opportunities that may arise from time to time subject to appropriate due diligence and governance arrangements being in place.**

Treasury Management 2019/20 mid-year report

The recommendation set out in Paper C on page 85 to be proposed by Cllr Fothergill seconded by Cllr Leyshon, debated and voted upon as detailed below.

Following debate the Council will be asked by the Chair to vote upon:

Treasury Management mid-year Report – see Paper C

The Council is to endorse the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2019-20.

7 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Guide Time: 11.20am

Chair to invite the Jill Johnson OBE (Chair of the Board) to set out key points from the report. The recommendations set out below to be proposed by Cllr Nicholson, seconded by Cllr Redman.

Chair to then invite other members to debate and ask any questions. Cllr Nicholson to answer any questions. If necessary, Julian Wooster, Director of Childrens Services may also be invited to answer any points raised. Following debate Chair to highlight to members that the recommendations are set out on page 103 and members should refer to these when voting.

The Corporate Parenting Board requests:

1. That Council invites District Councillor representation on the Corporate Parenting Board to provide support on housing and leisure issues

2. That Council extend its thanks to the young people on the Care Councils for all the hard work that they undertake.

3. That Council recommends that Councillors appointed to the Corporate Parenting who do not attend Board meetings for three consecutive meetings are reported to Group Leads

Adjournment

Chair to then propose a 10 minute adjournment

8. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

Guide Time: 11.45am

Chair to highlight that there are two reports from the Monitoring Officer, one regarding the Scrutiny Review and the other regarding changes to Committee Appointments.

Scrutiny Review

Chair to request that the Council consider the report by the Monitoring Officer (starting from page 185) setting out proposed improvements to the Council's scrutiny arrangements following endorsement and support from the Council's three scrutiny committees, the Cabinet and Constitution & Standards Committee. Chair to invite the Monitoring Officer to highlight key points and then to invite Cllr Redman, Cllr Prior-Sankey and Cllr Groskop to add any further points regarding the proposed improvements.

Chair to invite any questions from members and debate on the proposed improvements. Following debate the Council the Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 186 which are to be proposed by Cllr Fothergill seconded by Cllr J Lock. Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

That the County Council:

- 1. agree to implement a programme of cultural transformation and improvements to its Scrutiny arrangements by March 2021, including the provision of additional resources in the Democratic Services Team and members training budgets to deliver the enhanced scrutiny arrangements;**
- 2. Authorise the Monitoring Officer to undertake any necessary technical amendments to the Council's Constitution to support the implementation of the proposed improvements to the Council's scrutiny arrangements; and**
- 3. Request that the Monitoring Officer undertakes further work regarding the proposals for co-opted members (with non-voting rights) to be potentially included within the membership of the Scrutiny Committee Policies and Place and the Scrutiny Committee for Adults and Health with a view towards reporting these proposals to the Council's Annual General Meeting.**

8A Changes to Committee Appointments

Chair to request that the Council consider the report by the Monitoring Officer (starting from page 237) setting out proposed changes to the membership of Officer Appeals Committee, Constitution & Standards Committee and other committee appointments. Monitoring Officer to refer members to the Appointments Schedule which sets out the proposed changes.

Chair to invite any questions from members and debate on the proposed improvements. Following debate the Council the Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 237 which are to be proposed by Cllr Fothergill seconded by Cllr J Lock. Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

The County Council is recommended to:

- 1. agree to increase the composition of the Officer Appeals Committee from six to nine elected members (see 3.2.7 below);**
- 2. agree to increase the composition of the Constitution & Standards Committee from five to six elected members (see 3.2.7 below); and**
- 3. approve the revised committee appointments set out in this report and the Appointments Schedule at Appendix 1 (to follow) – see section 3.**

9 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Guide Time: 12.05pm

Chair to invite the Chief Executive to set out his recommendations for the County Council to appoint officers to the statutory officer roles of Chief Finance Officer, Director of Adult Social Services and the appointment of the Monitoring Officer.

Chair to invite any questions from members. Following any questions the Chair to highlight the recommendations on page 243 which are to be proposed by Cllr Chilcott seconded by Cllr Hunt. Chair to then invite the Council to vote upon:

It is recommended that the Council:

- 1. appoint and empower Jason Vaughan (Director of Finance from 1 March 2020) to the statutory role of Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) with all the legislative and constitutional delegated powers for this role with effect from 1 March 2020 (see section 3.1 below) ;**
- 2. appoint and empower Mel Lock (Director of Adults & Health Services) to the statutory role of Director of Adult Social Services with all the legislative and constitutional delegated powers for this role with immediate effect (see**

section 3.2 below);

3 appoint and empower Scott Wooldridge (Strategic Manager-Governance & Democratic Services) to the statutory role of Monitoring Officer with all the legislative and constitutional delegated powers for this role with immediate effect (see section 3.3 of this report).

10. REQUISITIONED ITEMS

Guide Time: 12.15pm

To consider the following requisitioned item – **Local Government NJC PAY TO Somerset County Council**

Chair to invite Cllr Redman to present and propose the requisitioned item and seconded by Cllr Dimery.

Chair to invite Cllr Chilcott to respond to the question raised in public question time by Nigel Behan and to respond to the proposed requisitioned item.

Chair to invite other members to debate and ask any questions. Cllr Chilcott to answer any questions raised and if necessary Chris Squire (HR & OD Director) may also be invited to answer any points raised.

Following debate Chair to highlight to members that the recommendations are set out on page 249 of the agenda pack and members should refer to these when voting:

Council Motion:

Somerset County Council resolves to:

- **Support the pay claim submitted by GMB, UNISON and Unite on behalf of council and school workers for a £10 per hour minimum wage and a 10 per cent uplift across all other pay points in 2020/21.**
- **Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to the next government to fund the NJC pay claim.**
- **Write to the new Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be fully funded with new & on-going money from central government.**
- **Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim.**
- **Encourage all local government workers to join a union.**

11. REPORT OF THE LEADER AND CABINET – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION **Guide Time: 12.25pm**

Item 11 – to be introduced by Cllr David Fothergill – Leader of the Council

To be noted.

Member Questions to the Leader and Cabinet Members will be taken under this item in the following order:

- **Cllr David Fothergill**
- **Cllr Mandy Chilcott**
- **Cllr John Woodman**
- **Cllr Frances Nicholson**
- **Cllr Christine Lawrence (Cllr Fothergill to answer any questions)**
- **Cllr David Hall**
 - **(The Chair to invite Cllr Hall to present his Annual Report - Item 12 - at this point)**
- **Cllr David Huxtable**
 - **(The Chair to invite Cllr Huxtable to present his Annual Report - Item 13 - at this point)**
- **Cllr Faye Purbrick**

Following debate the Council will be asked by the Chair to note the Leader and Cabinet's report for information, the Annual Report of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Planning & Community Infrastructure and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

12. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE **Guide Time: n/a**

Item 12 – to be taken under item 11

To be noted.

13. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE **Guide Time: n/a**

Item 13 – to be taken under item 11

To be noted.

14 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PENSIONS COMMITTEE Guide Time: 12.45pm

Item 14 – to be introduced by Cllr Graham Noel, Chair of the Pensions Committee

To be noted.

15 ARMED FORCES COVENANT ANNUAL REPORT Guide Time: 12.55pm

Item 15 – to be introduced by Cllr Rod Williams, Armed Member Champion

To be noted.

16 REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE Guide Time: 1.10pm

Item 16 – to be introduced by Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey – Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee

To be noted.

17 REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE Guide Time: 1.20pm

Item 17 – to be introduced by Cllr Leigh Redman – Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

To be noted.

18 REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES AND PLACE COMMITTEE Guide Time: 1.30pm

Item 18 – to be introduced by Cllr Anna Groskop – Chair of the Scrutiny for Policies and Place

To be noted.

Finish: 1.40pm

Annex A - Public and Member Questions

Public questions			
PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/statement
PQ1	David Redgewell	Taunton Bus Station	<p>From a passenger perspective and an organisation which considers Taunton to be a major transport interchange of the SouthWest, whilst we welcome the new bus rail interchange Taunton Station, we are acutely aware that the design of the interchange being built by Network Rail and First Group only involves 5 bus bays. Therefore, we would be extremely concerned if the Council thought that by shutting Tower Street Bus station that these facilities could be replaced at Taunton Railway Station, without considerable amounts of work and investment in building. We therefore think it is essential that we retain the bus station for its regional connectivity (Wellington, Tiverton, Axminster, Wells and Burnham and Bridgewater), as well as being a major hub for national express.</p> <p>Whilst we wouldn't be against the relocation of the bus station within the town centre and are aware that the Crescent has been previously considered, we would not consider it appropriate to make the Parade into a linear bus Station.</p> <p>The bus station currently includes a café, information centre, staff accommodation and toilets. We would urge the Council to consider full Consultation allowing engagement with Somerset Bus Users, TravelWatch SouthWest, UK Citizens, Transport Focus etc. There must be consultation.</p> <p>We must emphasise that, our concern is with retention of facility to the community and not in the land and that if the facility is moved, we would like full consultation with key stakeholders.</p> <p>TravelWatch SouthWest will be supplying it's own note of concern and hope that you will engage with us as soon as possible.</p>
PQ2	Nigel Behan	Taunton Bus Station	<p>Will SCC commit to campaign to maintain Taunton Bus Station on the existing site as a Bus Station (if possible, with Somerset West & Taunton (SWT) who part own the site) Somerset County Council (SCC) state:</p> <p>"Together we look at the transport requirements throughout Somerset and work out the best way to achieve a comprehensive and efficient transport network."?</p>

			<p>If an alternative site (similar Town Centre location) can be secured – would it be able to cope (have the capacity) with - at least- the existing flow and movement of buses and coaches?</p>
<p>Answer: From Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>			
PQ3	Sigurd Reimers	Pensions Investments	<p>Nearly half of all investments worldwide are made by pensions schemes (1).</p> <p>A large proportion of these investments are in fossil fuels, which are harmful to the climate and the wider environment, and particularly to the younger generation.</p> <p>County Council pensions schemes up and down this country are also involved in making such investments.</p> <p>However, some Councils are already using their ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) powers in finding attractive alternative investments. Furthermore, Brunel Pensions Partnership, a pensions pool in which Somerset is a stakeholder, have just joined in signing a resolution requesting Barclays Bank to stop investing in fossil fuels. (2)</p> <p>I have attended nearly all the meetings of Somerset County Council’s Pensions Committee in the past three years. At most of these I have asked questions about their policy on fossil fuels investments. I have found little, if any, interest in reducing such investments, exemplified in one of their few comments about climate change in their most recent annual report: “For example, the Fund will not require any form of dis-investment from fossil fuels, tobacco or such like.” (3) This position is being held despite national resolutions about divestment from large constituent bodies such as some of the Unions (4).</p> <p>Somerset County Council staff contribute to and benefit financially from the Somerset County Council pensions scheme, and are therefore, probably unwittingly, contributing to the problem</p>

Item County Council - 10.00 am Wednesday 22 January 2020

			<p>of continued fossil fuel use.</p> <p>In the end, pensions are mainly intended for retired people. I stand here as one of those people, and my question is: Does my County Council believe that the climate emergency they declared last year is serious enough to challenge its own Pensions Committee on its apparent indifference to the effects of climate change on its future pensioners and their families?</p>
<p>Answer: From Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources</p>			
PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ4	Nigel Behan	Local Government NJC PAY TO Somerset County Council	<p><u>http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s13992/REQUISITION%20MOTION%20-%20NJC%20pay%20claim%20for%20November%20full%20council.pdf</u></p> <p>In the MTFP Strategy Paper (<u>http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s13808/MTFP%20Strategy%20Paper%202020-23.pdf</u>) that went to Cabinet on 18th December 2019 it is stated:</p> <p>“The continued lobbying regarding the review of Local Government Funding is necessary to optimise the long-term financial sustainability and stability of the Councils financial position.”</p> <p>Further on in the paper it is noted that a key (“core spending”) assumption is that Pay will increase by “2.75% for each year” as an “estimate of current pay negotiations”</p> <p>Will Somerset County Council urge the new government to fully fund a (in real terms) pay increase in Local Government as employees have lost approximately 21% of the value of their pay since 2010?</p>

Answer: From Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Cabinet Member for Resources as part of agenda item 10

PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ5	Mike Ginger	Investment in cycle and walking infrastructure	<p>Taunton Area Cycling Campaign recently presented our 'Turn the network blue' petition to Councillor Woodman. The petition calls for real investment in cycle and walking infrastructure so that these become alternatives to the 10,000s of short car journeys, particularly with the expected uptake in e bike ownership. Nearly 50% of CO2 emissions in Somerset are from the transport sector and tackling this quickly must be a priority. Increased active travel will help tackle increasing public health issues from inactive lifestyles. Better provision will reduce injuries and deaths to pedestrians and cyclists from road crashes. The petition received 1800 signatures.</p> <p>We'd like to thank Councillor Woodman for his time and the constructive conversation that we had. While we wait for the official response to the petition, we have a number of follow up questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will SCC adopt our network plan for future policy? Although there is now a draft Local Cycling and Walking Plan, this only covers a number of routes, rather than a comprehensive network. SWTC have adopted it as a policy document 2. Will SCC appoint a 'Cycling Champion' to spearhead the cycling network work, in the same way that some other authorities and SWTC have? 3. When do SCC envisage that work will be begin on the route improvements outlined in the LCWIP?

Answer: Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
PQ6	Nigel Behan	Climate Emergency	<p>This Question relates to Item 6 Report of the Leader and Cabinet - for decision (Paper A Climate Emergency Framework) http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/documents/s13987/Paper%20A%20Climate%20Emergency%20Framework.pdf</p> <p>The BBC reported that Sir David Attenborough warned "The moment of crisis has come" in efforts to tackle Climate Change. He also said "We have to realise that this is not playing games," "This is not just having a nice little debate, arguments and then coming away with a compromise.</p> <p>And</p> <p>"This is an urgent problem that has to be solved and, what's more, we know how to do it - that's the paradoxical thing, that we're refusing to take steps that we know have to be taken."</p> <p>The BBC report continued:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-51123638</p> <p>"This year is seen as a vital opportunity to turn the tide on climate change.</p> <p>The UK is hosting what's billed as a crucial UN summit, known as COP26, in Glasgow in November.</p> <p>Ahead of that gathering, governments worldwide are coming under pressure to toughen their targets for cutting emissions.</p>

			<p>That's because their current pledges do not go nearly far enough."</p> <p>Does SCC believe it (along with the District Councils) has prioritised (taking action) sufficiently -for instance much more focus than "Business as Usual" (more resources/finances and people etc) - to address the Climate Change "Emergency"?</p>
<p>Answer: Cllr David Hall, Cabinet Member</p>			
<p>PQ7</p>	<p>Alan Debenham</p>	<p>Council budget</p>	<p>I note that in the Queen's Speech Commons debate last week the Secretary for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in latest Johnson-led new Tory government's exaggerated "post-Brexit golden age style", now announces that the Local Government financial settlement for the coming year and the new decade is going to be the most fantastic compared with the last decade and would involve an increase of government support finance to the tune of an annual increase of 4% in real terms, including another £1 billion centrally allocated support fund for Social Care and renewed permission for a special Adult Care dedicated 2% Council Tax levy, plus again, selected Councils being allowed to have control over spending of local business rates and not necessarily being restricted in any Council Tax increase they may pursue, etc.</p> <p>What does all this mean in detail for the coming 2020/21 Budget for Somerset and will this Council make a response pointing out that Council Tax in its current form is very regressive in not bearing sensible relationship to people's incomes and urgently needs radical reform or replacement (reference Layfield Royal Commission report 1976 plus recent active support for site and land value taxes), alongside promised changes to business rates ?</p> <p>Is the Council now going to be able to plan in terms of there being, not only no further cuts in services or staff, but in fact restoration of many of the severe cuts made over the past Tory government's unneeded and over-excessive ten-year austerity?</p>

Item County Council - 10.00 am Wednesday 22 January 2020

Answer: Cllr Mandy Chilcot, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources

PQ8	Alan Debenham	Unitary authority	In the latest news and potential consultation programme initiated by this Council regarding Local Councils re-organisation, possibly creating a Somerset Unitary Authority, how and why is it, in the name of better democratic engagement and 'localism', not deemed essential to put the point of view that Somerset County Council should be abolished and more powers given to District and Parish Councils, especially with regard to new very local administration to meet the present and increasing Climate Emergency which is likely to lead to social and economic breakdown in the next decade or so ?
-----	---------------	-------------------	---

Answer: Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council

Member Questions – to be considered as part of Agenda Item 11

PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
MQ1	Cllr Liz Leyshon	Future of Local Government	How will the Leader of this Council ensure that the residents of Somerset and elected Members of all Authorities have confidence that the process of determining the Future of Local Government in Somerset will include the virtues of transparency, democracy and openness?
MQ2	Cllr Jane Lock	Unitary Authorities	Can you give a recent example of where a newly formed unitary council has been on budget with set up costs and achieved the expected savings within the set timescale, where not all the local authorities involved were in agreement with the proposal? Dorset has been quoted which does not seem a like for like comparison.

Answer: From Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of the Council

PQ/MQ	From	Topic	Question/Statement
MQ3	Cllr Hugh Davies	B3191 Watchet	Has the Council considered placing a weight limit on the section of road on B3191 where there is the ongoing cliff erosion in the vicinity of Daw Castle to preserve it and help prevent further damage?

Answer: From Cllr John Woodman, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport