

## South Somerset District Council

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Brympton Way, YEOVIL, Somerset BA20 2HT** on **Thursday 3 September 2015**.

(9.30 am - 1.33 pm)

### **Present:**

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Carol Goodall  
Peter Gubbins  
Henry Hobhouse  
Shane Pledger

Jo Roundell Greene  
Sylvia Seal  
Angie Singleton  
Nick Weeks

### **Also Present:**

Clare Aparicio Paul  
Jason Baker  
Mike Beech  
Neil Bloomfield  
Amanda Broom  
Nick Colbert  
John Field

Tim Inglefield  
Val Keitch  
Mike Lewis  
Tony Lock  
Sue Osborne  
Sue Steele  
Colin Winder

### **Officers**

Rina Singh  
Ian Clarke  
Donna Parham  
Steve Joel  
Martin Woods  
Paul Wheatley  
Emily McGuinness  
Angela Cox

Interim Chief Executive  
Assistant Director (Legal and Corporate Services)  
Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)  
Assistant Director (Health & Well-Being)  
Assistant Director (Economy)  
Principal Spatial Planner  
Scrutiny Manager  
Democratic Services Manager

**Note:** All decisions were approved without dissent unless shown otherwise.

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### **57. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

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### **58. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Seib and Vega Sturgess (Strategic Director).

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### **59. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest made.

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#### **60. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)**

The Committee were addressed by Mr A Fairbairn of the Somerset Cricket Board, Mr P Saunders, Secretary of the Rifle and Pistol Club, Mr S Ewens and Mr A Watts, Team Captains of the Cricket Club, Mrs S Dark of the table tennis club, Mrs S Larcombe, petition organiser and Mr T Wheeler of the Allotment Association regarding Agenda item 6: Westland Leisure Complex. Their comments included:-

- The Westland cricket ground was the only ground in Yeovil and had 12 teams at both a junior and senior level.
- The rifle and pistol club had been in existence at Westlands for over 60 years and there was no alternative provision in the area. They were self-financing but were not able to invest due to their lack of tenure.
- The Westland cricket ground was one of the best in the county although the changing rooms were not up to standard.
- The Westland cricket club had just enjoyed its most successful year and had over 110 youth players.
- The Westland table tennis club had 11 teams in the local league and had members from across Somerset.
- There were lots of new housing projects planned within the town which would increase the population and those people needed somewhere to play sports.
- The Westland social club had been in existence since the 1940's and it still attracted over 200 people to the weekly dance group. The hall was used for presentations and banquets and was an ideal facility for large events.
- There were over 60 allotments which were all actively worked at the Westland site.

Mrs Larcombe presented a petition of 8,127 signatures against the closure of the Westland Sports and Social Club.

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#### **61. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)**

The Chairman advised that the Somerset and Devon's authorities expression of interest in devolution would be submitted to the Government the following day and a statement on this would be circulated to all Members. He confirmed that at the present time, SSDC had only committed to being involved in the project.

The Chairman also thanked the Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) for the comprehensive report he had compiled on the Westland Leisure Complex at very short notice.

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#### **62. Future of Westland Leisure Complex (Agenda Item 6)**

The Chairman confirmed that confidential papers detailing the finance involved in the project had been circulated to Councillors.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture reminded Members that the report had been produced at very short notice and at the request of Councillors to enable them to ascertain whether they should seek to take over the management and operation of the Westland Sport and Leisure Complex and save the facility for the overall benefit of the community. She said the report was very balanced as it detailed the risks and implications to the public purse as well as the benefits to the community.

The Assistant Director (Health and Well-Being) provided Members with a power point presentation of the main points of the proposal to enter into an agreement with Augusta Westland to take over the management and operation of the Complex for a 30 year term. He noted that the loss of the site would exacerbate the sports deficiencies in the area, the site had potential to accommodate additional sporting facilities, marketing of the site was key to its future, the refurbishment costs were estimated at £2.5m, Yeovil Town Council had agreed to contribute towards the operating costs, and, there would be a proposed £1 levy on Octagon and Westland event ticket sales to fund the future operation of the complex.

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that if Members wished to prioritise the Westland Leisure Complex, then it could impact on the delivery of other council services in the future.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee said they had commended officers for the considerable amount of work which had been achieved in producing the report. Their further comments were that an interim recommendation be made to agree in principle to the proposal with further reports to the Executive and Council before the signature of a lease, also, the potential of separating the sporting facilities from the social complex be explored and that a member of the Scrutiny Committee be part of any proposed project group.

During a lengthy discussion, Members were generally supportive of the proposals and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture suggested amending the recommendations to propose the formation of a project board to look at previous hire and booking records, the roof structures, the condition and remaining life of the electrical and mechanical services installation and mains equipment and also a structural assessment of retaining walls around the site. It was also agreed that the project board explore the possibility of dividing the sporting facilities from the social complex and also the VAT implications of the revenue and capital expenditure.

At the conclusion of the debate, the amended recommendations proposed by the Portfolio Holder were seconded, and on being put to the vote, were carried (voting: 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention).

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive agreed:

1. to give serious consideration to the refurbishment and operation of facilities at the Westland Sports and Leisure Complex on a broadly similar basis to their current use;
2. that prior to considering the published recommendations 8.1 to 8.6, the Executive requires regular monitoring of the risk log by the project board, and in particular the following items:
  1. Previous hire and bookings.
  2. Roof structures.

3. The condition and remaining life of the electrical services installation and mains equipment.
  4. The condition and remaining life of the mechanical services installation and mains equipment.
  5. A structural assessment of retaining walls around the site.
3. to approve the once-off use of up to £3,500 of general revenue balances to fund this further evaluation work;
  4. the formation of a project board.

**Reason:** To enable Members to ascertain whether they should seek to take over the management and operation of the Westland Sport and Leisure Complex in Yeovil for the overall benefit of the community.

(voting: 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention)

### **63. Update on the SSDC 5 Year Housing Land Supply (Agenda Item 7)**

The Committee were first addressed by Mr N Whitsun-Jones, representing the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) and Mr J Labrom, a resident of Broadway. Their comments included:-

- An early review of the Local Plan was required to look again at the housing figures which the CPRE had disputed at the Planning Inquiry the previous year.
- Although the implications of not being able to demonstrate a 5 year land supply were huge, it was only the housing policies which were affected.
- Broadway was a housing hot spot and few applications had local support so the loss of the 5 year land supply could mean more speculative development.
- The Council had been unable to demonstrate a 5 year land supply for 7 out of 9 years.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning advised that the housing figure for the district had been set by formula and it had been found sound by the Planning Inspector. She confirmed that the Local Plan was due to be reviewed and although the number of completed houses was now increasing, one of the reasons for under delivery was developers not building the houses they had permission for.

The Principal Spatial Planner advised that they were obliged to provide an annual update on the Council's five year housing land supply as part of the wider Government ambition to scale up housing delivery. He confirmed that the annualised average of properties to be built was 725 but this had only been achieved in 2 out of the past 9 years and because of this persistent under development, a 20% buffer had to be applied to the target of properties to be built. He also confirmed that:-

- the consequence of not being able to demonstrate a five year land supply was that the Council's housing policies in the Local Plan were deemed to be out of date. This was not the same as being deleted but they were given reduced weight when determining planning applications.
- When Members considered planning applications, they needed to understand whether the adverse impact and demonstrable harm of granting permission would outweigh the benefit of the development.

- In order to rectify this situation, an early review of the Local Plan and its supporting documents was under way.
- The Council would need to take a more proactive approach to housing development as it came forward.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee asked that all necessary support and resource be given to the Spatial Policy team to help them to demonstrate a five year housing land supply in the near future. She also questioned how many housing development sites had been granted planning permission in the past 12 months.

In response to questions from Members, the Principal Spatial Planner and the Assistant Director (Economy) confirmed that:

- In future planning applications, Members would need to assess other impacts of a development such as transport or flood risk.
- A poorly designed scheme should still be refused planning permission.
- Members still had a range of policies within the Local Plan which would still apply.

During a lengthy discussion, Members expressed their concern at the lack of a five year housing land supply for the District and its impact on future planning applications. It was proposed that a guidance note be provided to Town and Parish Councils to advise them of the impact of the five year housing land supply and housing policy SS2 and the Principal Spatial Planner agreed to provide this. At the conclusion of the debate, Members confirmed the recommendations of the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive agreed to:

1. endorse the Five-year Housing Land Supply update paper, and resolve that the conclusions and implications are effective as of 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 (See Appendix A);
2. delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director for Economy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to make any final minor text amendments which may be necessary to enable the Five-year Housing Land Supply update paper to be published;
3. provide guidance to communities affected by policy SS2 on the conclusions detailed in section 6 of the report.

**Reason:** To provide an update on the Council's five-year housing land supply position for the period 2015 to 2020.

#### **64. Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report - 1st Quarter 2015/16 (Agenda Item 8)**

The Performance Manager advised that 92% of the performance indicators were on or above target for the quarter period. She noted that at the current time, the % of calls resolved in the contact centre could not be measured and work to resolve this was ongoing. There had been a significant increase in the number of complaints received by the Council overall from the same period last year. This included the Streetscene

service, however six of the complaints were related to a service reduction by the County Council; the Revenues and Benefits service, where there was no obvious reason or particular pattern, and, the Customer Focus service, the majority of which related to call waiting times. The Customer Services Manager had noted that call volume during this period was higher than at other times of the year due to Council Tax billing and election enquiries and that extra temporary staff had been taken on to address this.

In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the performance indicators would be refreshed following a review of the Council Plan and as before, this process would be supported by a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Performance Manager agreed to seek clarification on the complaints relating to the Crematorium as this had only recently come under the management of the Council.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the performance information provided.

**RESOLVED:** That District Executive agreed to note the information contained in the corporate performance monitoring report.

**Reason:** To present the corporate performance monitoring report covering the period from 1st April – 30th June 2015 (Q1).

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## 65. Monthly News Snapshot (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Economic Development thanked the six Streetscene Services staff who had cleared the Odcombe Recreation Ground of all waste in a four hour clean up operation following a recent unauthorised encampment by a group of travellers.

Members were content to note the monthly news snapshot information.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive noted the monthly news snapshot information.

**Reason:** The report is provided for members information.

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## 66. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted the following additions to the Executive Forward Plan and Consultation database:

- Yeovil Crematorium Update Report – November 2015
- Building Control Update Report – November 2015
- Consultation on a review of the Feed In Tariff Scheme – closing date 23/10/15

It was also requested that the consultation on devolving Sunday trading rules be circulated to the Area Chairmen.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following addition;
  - Yeovil Crematorium Update Report – November 2015
  - Building Control Update Report – November 2015
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B, with the following additional consultation:-
  - Consultation on a Review of the Feed In Tariff Scheme

**Reason:** The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

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**67. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

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Chairman

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Date