

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Brympton Way, Yeovil, Somerset. on Thursday 1 February 2018.**

(9.30 am - 12.15 pm)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Peter Gubbins	Peter Seib
Henry Hobhouse	Angie Singleton
Val Keitch	Nick Weeks
Jo Roundell Greene	Derek Yeomans (to 10.50am)
Sylvia Seal	

Also Present:

Mike Lewis	Sue Steele
Tony Lock	Colin Winder

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Commissioning)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Nicola Hix	Lead Specialist (Finance)
Angela Watson	Monitoring Officer
Helen Rutter	Communities Lead
Charlotte Jones	People, Performance & Change Lead
Nigel O'Grady	Principal Food Safety Officer
David Crisfield	Third Sector and Equalities Co-ordinator
Caroline White	Commercial Property, Land and Development Manger
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Specialist

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

107. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 4th January 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

108. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

There were no apologies for absence.

109. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

110. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no questions from members of the public present.

111. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman advised that SSDC had successfully bid for funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund and had been awarded £1.98m towards construction of the link road through the Brimsmore development in Yeovil. Although further funding would be required to construct the road, it would open up the development site.

112. SSDC Council Action Plan 2018-19 (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman advised that Council had adopted a 5 year plan setting out the overall direction of travel for the Council in 2016. Underneath the Council Plan was the Annual Action Plan which was reviewed annually.

The People, Performance and Change Lead advised that all Members had been consulted by email on any amendments to the Annual Action Plan and the Scrutiny Committee had also provided feedback which would be incorporated into the final document to be presented to Full Council for approval. She said there had been reference to the inclusion of land based businesses however, this would form part of the Economic Development Strategy to be produced later in the year.

During discussion the following points were made:-

- SSDC were now part of the IAero project with a range of other partners and were understanding how it reacted with the Innovation Centre.
- The Heart of the South West Joint Committee could engage with the NFU to understand their future direction through their Productivity Plan.
- Although SSDC were not the delivery agent for Broadband, the connectivity in the area was a KPI.
- An absence of formal complaints was not a measure of customer satisfaction and more work would be carried out on customer satisfaction,
- Some of the KPI's were directly benchmarked with other local authorities and some were local KPI's.
- There was data available at postcode level and there was some work to be done to join up this data to Ward level.
- The measuring of the number of fly tipping incidences was to be separated from other incidences of anti-social behaviour.
- The household recycling rates were now reported as a Somerset wide figure and were not separated into Council areas.

It was noted that there was no mention of the use of alternative technologies within the Council Plan and it was agreed to add this in to the Our Focus section.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the Council Plan, Annual Action Plan (as amended) and key performance indicators for approval by Full Council at their meeting on 22nd February 2018.

RESOLVED: That District Executive recommend that Full Council agree to:-

- a. adopt the Council Plan, Annual Action Plan and key performance indicators at their meeting on 22nd February 2018 (Appendix A,B, and D) as amended;
- b. note and comment on the draft measures, targets and milestones for each Priority Project (Appendix C);
- c. approve the monitoring arrangements as set out in the report.

Reason: To recommend adoption of the Council Plan, Annual Action Plan and key performance indicators by Full Council on the 22nd February 2018.

113. 2018/19 Draft Revenue and Capital Budgets and Medium Term Financial Plan (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that a number of the key trends had been translated into pictures and the report contained some sensitivity testing to demonstrate the impact of an extra percentage on the budget. He noted that SSDC had experienced the most severe budget cut in England but despite this, a balanced budget was being proposed and services protected, due in part to officers work, Transformation and income generation. The recommended Council Tax increase was £5 for the year.

The Section 151 Officer confirmed that he was satisfied the proposed budget was reasonable and robust and the reserves were adequate. He noted that although a negative Rate Support Grant was proposed in the 2019/20 financial year, the Government were committed to consulting on this during 2018.

In response to questions from Members, the Section 151 Officer confirmed that:-

- The proposed Council Tax increase was £5 and the Somerset Rivers Authority funding of £1.85 was included within this.
- The calculation for New Homes Bonus funding had changed the previous year and this was now reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan. SSDC's reliance on this funding would be reduced in the future.
- He would clarify the incremental changes and absolute amounts in the report presented to Full Council.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members voted on each recommendation and unanimously agreed to confirm the Draft Budget and proposed council tax for 2018/19 to Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED: That District Executive recommend that Full Council agree to:-

- a. approve the Net Revenue Budget for 2018/19 of **£16.483m**, as set

out in the Revenue Account Summary (paragraph 23) and in detail in Appendix A for the District Executive and four Area Committees, subject to any final amendments;

- b. a 2018/19 Council tax increase of £5, increasing the annual Band D basic rate by 3.18% to £162.48. This comprises £160.63 for SSDC, raising £9,746,896, and £1.85 on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority, raising £110,978 to transfer to Somerset Rivers Authority;
- c. approve the transfer of £468k from earmarked reserve balances to assist with the shortfall on the Transformation budget, as detailed in paragraph 50, and note the remaining balances;
- d. approve the additions to the Capital Programme for new capital bids of £1.987m as shown in Appendix E;
- e. note the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement and Capital Prudential Indicators as attached at Appendix H.

Reason: To recommend the Draft Budget and proposed council tax for 2018/19 to Full Council for approval.

(Voting: unanimous in favour)

114. 2017/18 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2017 (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that this was the third quarter review of the councils revenue budgets.

The Chairman noted that although planning income had increased, this was offset by the cost of the service. He also confirmed that SSDC had taken the opportunity afforded by the Government to increase planning application fees.

It was clarified that the Funding Adviser and grant mentioned in paragraph 13 of the report related to SPARK (part of the network of Councils for Voluntary Service).

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. noted the current 2017/18 financial position of the Council;
- b. noted the reasons for variations to the previously approved Directorate Budgets as detailed in paragraph 7;
- c. noted the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 23 and the position of the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in Appendix D;

- d. noted the virements made under delegated authority as detailed in Appendix B.

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the revenue budgets of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved annual budgets for the period 1st April to 31st December 2017

115. 2017/18 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ending 31st December 2017 (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report and advised that the estimated capital spend had been revised up to £18.497m. He also noted the flexible use of capital receipts.

The Chairman noted that the major slippage on the capital programme was the loan to the Somerset Waste Partnership for new vehicles.

There was no debate and Members were content to approve the revised capital programme.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. noted the content of the report;
- b. approved the revised capital programme spend as detailed in paragraph 6:

Reason: To update Members on the current financial position of the capital programme of the Council and to report the reasons for variations from approved budgets for the period 1st October 2017 to 31st December 2017.

116. District-wide Strategic Grants - Proposal for two-year funding agreements with Access for All, CASS and SPARK 2018-2020 (Agenda Item 10)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report noting the proposal to move to a two year funding arrangement with the charitable organisations which would help them to access other funding and give them some security. There would be a monitoring agreement with break clauses and this could be a step towards three year funding in the future.

The Third Sector and Equalities Co-ordinator confirmed that the organisations had significantly improved their performance and the Council had confidence in them.

During debate, the following points were made:-

- The 3 organisations linked in with several SSDC services.
- Recommendation 3 be amended to add 'considering' and 'rolling'
- If a grant funded organisation had a service level agreement with SSDC it could only apply for further grant funding for a specific project or piece of work.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were pleased to confirm the proposals for two-year funding agreements with Access for All, CASS and SPARK.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. agreed to a two year funding agreement, with appropriate break clauses, for the period April 2018 to March 2020, with payment of the year two grant subject to a satisfactory performance report, for the following amounts:
 - i. Citizens Advice South Somerset at £121,730 per annum
 - ii. SPARK at £74,260 per annum
 - iii. Access for All at £9,000 per annum
- b. agreed to receive a progress report in 2019;
- c. agreed to receive a further report in 2020 with a view to considering moving to rolling three year funding agreements from 2020 onwards.

Reason: To confirm the future funding of three strategic voluntary sector partners Citizens Advice South Somerset (CASS); SPARK and Access for All, for the period 2018-2020.

117. Loan to Somerset Care & Repair Ltd (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman noted that the report had originally been released as a Portfolio Holder decision, however, due to the size of the proposed loan and the departure from current policy, he had agreed that it be determined at District Executive. He noted that Somerset Care and Repair was a not-for-profit organisation working across Somerset and relied upon grants to bring homes back into use. The loan would allow the completion of the conversion at the Milford Inn and SSDC would have a charge on the property as security.

During discussion, it was noted that SSDC would have 5 year nomination rights to the converted properties when complete. It was also suggested that the current loans policy be reviewed in light of this situation.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. agreed for Wessex Home Loans (Wessex Resolutions CIC) to provide a loan of £200,000 to Somerset Care and Repair Ltd at a 4.5% fixed interest rate with capital and interest being repayable over 15 years.
- b. noted that this represented a departure from current policy which limits loans to £15,000;

- c. noted that the Loan would be conditional upon all necessary steps being put in place to ensure the security and repayment of the loan.

Reason: To agree for Wessex Home Loans (Wessex Resolutions CIC) to provide a loan of £200,000 to Somerset Care and Repair towards completing the conversion of the Milford Inn, Yeovil into six flats and to enable the building of three housing units in the grounds. This being a one off departure from existing policy.

118. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - Cost Recovery for Requested Re-inspections (Agenda Item 12)

The Portfolio Holder for Area West, Environmental Health and Health & Safety advised that there was a great deal of work involved in the setting up of a re-rating of a food hygiene inspection and the proposal was for full cost recovery only.

The Principal Food and Safety Officer advised that although food premises inspections were statutory, the food hygiene rating scheme was not. It had been introduced in 2011, and, in response to concerns from businesses who had to currently wait for 3 months for a re-inspection, the option to charge would mean a re-inspection could take place on receipt of the fee. He noted that the charge was similar to neighbouring authorities.

During discussion, Members noted the good relations with and helpful advice given by the food hygiene officers to food premises operators. It was noted that no charge was made for the first food hygiene rating scheme inspection, in accord with the scheme.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to agree the proposal to introduce a cost recovery fee for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-rating requests.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. noted the introduction of the Food Standard Agency's guidance to cost recovery for requested re-inspections in England;
- b. approved the proposal to introduce a cost recovery fee for Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-rating requests;
- c. approved the proposal to charge a fee of £115 for a Food Hygiene Rating Scheme re-rating inspection on the basis of full cost recovery.

Reason: To confirm the introduction of a fee to recover the costs associated with undertaking non-statutory visits to food businesses requesting a re-score of their food hygiene rating.

119. Commercial Property, Land and Development - Performance Management Indicators (PMI) Report (Agenda Item 13)

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation advised that following the David Lock Associates report the previous year, it had been agreed that SSDC would monitor its assets and ensure they were fit for purpose and performing. She said the Performance Management Indicators would feed in to the quarterly performance monitoring report to District Executive.

The Commercial Property Land and Development Manager advised that SSDC would be more strategic with its assets in the future and would measure their performance and plan in the short, medium and longer term what to do with them. She noted that two Property Development Managers would shortly be joining the team.

In response to questions from Members, the Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation advised that:-

- The Council's Disposals Policy and Community Asset Policy would be reviewed and refreshed shortly.
- The Performance Management Indicators would be in line with the Key Performance Indicators and would provide headline information. If further detail was required then it could be provided by officers.
- If a decision to dispose of a property asset was made, then there may be need for confidentiality although the Area Member could be informed.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- It was not in the public interest to breach confidentiality when disposing of an asset.
- Properties where SSDC had tenants occupying them would be treated differently to those which were empty.
- A more commercial approach would be taken to the disposal of small areas of land in the future, however, those disposed of in the past often enabled a housing development.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to confirm the implementation of the Performance Management Indicator (PMI) monitoring framework.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed:-

- a. to implement the Performance Management Indicator (PMI) monitoring framework as outlined in the report as the basis for measuring the performance of the Council's property assets and informing future Council decisions;
- b. over the next twelve months to undertake further work to create a reliable set of baseline figures upon which the new Performance Management Indicators (PMI's) will be predicated;
- c. to report the PMI's quarterly via SSDC's quarterly performance reporting process.

Reason: To provide the Council with a robust process for measuring the performance of its property portfolio in order to inform strategic decision making and to devise a comprehensive set of Performance Management Indicators to be applied across the Council's whole portfolio.

120. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 14)

The following addition to the Forward Plan was noted:

- Key 4 Life Project – March 2018

The following additional consultations were noted:-

- Local government ethical standards: stakeholder consultation
- Improving the use of planning conditions: consultation on draft regulations

The Chairman noted that SSDC would not be making a corporate response to the County Council's Library consultation but the Chief Executive would communicate the Council's aspiration to work with communities to find the best solution for them.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following addition;
 - Key 4 Life Project – March 2018
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B with the following additional consultations:-
 - Local government ethical standards: stakeholder consultation
 - Improving the use of planning conditions: consultation on draft regulations

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

121. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 1st March 2018 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

122. Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda Item 16)

RESOLVED: That the following item be considered in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under Paragraph 3: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

123. Commercial Services & Income Generation Update (Confidential) (Agenda Item 17)

The Portfolio Holder for Property, Climate Change and Income Generation introduced the report and outlined the investments made and possible future investment opportunities for the Council.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note the progress to date on service income reviews and initiatives and note the early performance of the commercial property investment portfolio and ongoing property asset review, which was being delivered in line with the approved Commercial Strategy.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed:-

- a. to note the progress to date on service income reviews and initiatives;
- b. to note the early performance of the commercial property investment portfolio and ongoing property asset review, which is being delivered in line with the approved Commercial Strategy.

Reason: To update members on the work carried out by managers and the Service Income Team to identify opportunities, internally from across the organisation, which may lead to increased levels of income or cost reduction and to approve the continuation of this work.

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Chairman

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Date