

South Somerset District Council

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

(9.30 am - 10.42 am)

Present:

Councillor Ric Pallister (Chairman)

Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Jo Roundell Greene

Peter Seib
Nick Weeks

Also Present:

Mike Lewis

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Commissioning)
Clare Pestell	Director (Commercial Services & Income Generation)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Angela Watson	Monitoring Officer
Nicola Hix	Lead Specialist (Finance)
Helen Rutter	Communities Lead
Steve Barnes	Play and Youth Facilities Officer
Pauline Burr	Arts Development Officer
Tim Cook	Area Development Lead (East)
Sharon Jones	Revenues Team Leader
Caroline White	Commercial Property, Land and Development Manger
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Specialist

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

124. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 1st February 2018, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

125. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Keitch, Sylvia Seal, Angie Singleton and Derek Yeomans.

126. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

127. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

128. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

129. District-wide Voluntary Sector Grants 2018/2019 (Agenda Item 6)

The Arts Development Officer introduced the report and advised that the SSDC core funding to the district-wide organisations enabled them to draw in other grants to further develop arts in the area.

Councillor Peter Seib noted that he was pleased to be granting funding Somerset Film, who, he hoped the Council would work with in the future to assist with professional communications.

There was no debate and Members were pleased to confirm the funding allocations as proposed.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. approved the proposed funding allocation of £26,500 to be funded from the District Wide Grants budget and Young People & Play budget proposed for 2018/19 to the following district wide organisations:-
 - a) Somerset Rural Youth Project - £8,000
 - b) Actiontrack Performance Company - £2,500
 - c) Take Art – £10,500
 - d) Somerset Arts Week - £3,500
 - e) Somerset Film - £2,000

Reason: To confirm the levels of funding for several district-wide organisations seeking financial support from SSDC in 2018/19.

130. SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation - Progress Report on Area Presence (Agenda Item 7)

The Portfolio Holder for Property, Climate Change and Income Generation advised that this was a holding report and as the Transformation programme progressed the need for office accommodation would be clearer. Underutilised or poor performing assets would be assessed and considered for disposal within the next two years.

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation noted that there was more space than needed in the area offices and alternative uses, renting out or selling would all be considered within the next two years.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That District Executive :-

- a. endorsed the principles for Area presence as set out in the report below. This included disposal of and/or redevelopment of its current Area Offices over the next 2 years in accordance with relevant governance and policies;
- b. noted that Officers will keep Members up to date on progress as specific proposals emerge for each Area.

Reason: To assess the current needs of the Council's offices against its future requirements, post Transformation, across the District.

131. Business Rates Relief - Local Discretionary Relief, Year 2 (Agenda Item 8)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services advised that SSDC were using their discretionary powers for a large part of the relief. He noted that recommendations A and B updated the business rate relief and recommendations C and D would extend the relief into the following year. The final recommendation noted that the discretionary grants awarded would be reimbursed by the Government.

The Chairman noted that there were no comments from the Scrutiny Committee on this item. There was no debate and Members unanimously confirmed the Business Rates Relief - Local Discretionary Relief scheme as proposed.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. approve an increase in the percentage of relief awarded for 2017/18 under the "Non Domestic Rates Revaluation Support Relief" Scheme from 43% to 55%;
- b. approve the continuation of the "Non Domestic Rates Revaluation Support Relief" Scheme for 2018/19 (Year 2) with revised award levels shown in para 16;
- c. approve the use of the Councils local discretionary powers to extend the Business Rate Relief Scheme for Pubs for the 2018/19 financial year;
- d. approve the use of the Councils local discretionary powers to extend the doubling of the Rural Rate Relief for the 2018/19 financial year;
- e. note that where the Council uses its local discount powers to award

the Revaluation Support Scheme, up to the maximum funding amounts given above, and to extend the Pub Relief for 2018/19 and the doubling of Rural Rate relief, the cost will be reimbursed in full by Government.

Reason: To approve an increase in the level of awards to businesses of “Revaluation Support Relief” for 2017/18.

132. South Somerset District Council Car Park Charging Policy Paper (Agenda Item 9)

The Portfolio Holder for Property, Climate Change and Income Generation advised that following discussion of the report at Scrutiny Committee, amended recommendations were now proposed. He noted that although there was no wish to increase charges during the current year, a four yearly increase in July 2019 was proposed.

During a lengthy discussion, Members debated the wording of the new recommendations and with advice from the Monitoring Officer and Lead Specialist (Finance) the recommendations were agreed as below.

At the conclusion of the debate, the new recommendations were proposed and seconded and Chairman asked that Members vote on them. A vote was taken as follows: 3 in favour, 2 against, 0 abstentions.

At the conclusion of the vote, Councillor Mike Lewis asked that a monthly analysis of car parking income be kept from now on as a statistical analysis of the usage of car parks.

The Chief Executive advised that car parking income was reported in the quarterly budget reports and car park usage could be determined from this. It was known that some car parks were underused.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. apply an increase in July 2019 based on the CPI inflation rate for the previous 4 years;
- b. thereafter, apply an increase every 4 years based on the CPI inflation rate for the previous 4 years;
- c. recommendation 1 and 2 above shall take effect where the cost of implementing the increase (for example new signage, adaptations to the machines etc.) does not outweigh the expected additional revenue to be generated; and
- d. recommend a full cost review of bench-marked market charges and car park operations as part of the car park strategy update to ensure alignment in the wider market area. This is to be carried out by officers in the financial year 2018/2019 for implementation in July 2019; subject to being approved at District Executive.

Reason: To consider various car park user improvements and benchmarking as part of an updated car park strategy and to present a longer term charging policy in line with the regulations in force.

(Voting: 3 in favour, 2 against, 0 abstentions)

133. The 'Making' of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda Item 10)

The Chairman asked Members to confirm the making of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan as proposed.

There was no debate and Members unanimously confirmed the making of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed to the making of the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan.

Reason: To note the result of the Referendum in relation to the Wincanton Neighbourhood Plan and to confirm that the Plan be 'made' (or adopted).

134. Key4Life - At Risk Preventative Programme in Somerset (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman noted that Lufton Depot were already successfully offering work experience to vulnerable young men and the proposal was to offer more work-experience places. There would be no cost to SSDC.

The Communities Lead confirmed that the Council were offering help in kind rather than finance and the level of support provided to the men on the scheme by Key4Life staff was unparalleled.

During a brief discussion, Members were very supportive of the scheme and were content to approve the proposal to investigate further similar opportunities with Key4Life.

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the work undertaken to date;
- b. approve the proposal to investigate further similar opportunities with Key4Life, relevant Officers to progress them, implement where appropriate and report back at the end of this programme.

Reason: To note the progress made with "in kind" support for the work of Key4Life following a presentation to the Leadership Meeting in September 2017.

135. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Nick Weeks asked if there were any plans to use the funding set aside to extend Broadband in rural areas?

Councillor Henry Hobhouse advised that a pilot Broadband hotspot was currently being trialled at the Area North offices, and, if it proved successful then further units would be purchased and potentially used in SSDC locality working vehicles. There was also the potential to purchase a greater number of units on a commercial scale and re-sell them as an income generation exercise.

The Chairman advised that if the trial was successful then a report on the proposal would be brought to District Executive in May or June.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments;
 - The SSDC Disposals Policy (revised) – April 2018
 - Private Sector Enforcement and charging policy – May 2018
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B, with the following additional consultations:
 - Civil society strategy: have your say
 - Strengthening consumer redress in the housing market

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

136. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 5th April 2018 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil commencing at 9.30 a.m.

137. Exclusion of Press and Public (Agenda Item 14)

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).

138. SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation - Feasibility Study Comparison of South Somerset District Council's Future Head Office options (Confidential) (Agenda Item 15)

The Portfolio Holder for Property, Climate Change and Income Generation introduced the report and advised that this was a holding report.

The Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation updated Members on the current situation and advised that as the Transformation programme progressed the need for office accommodation would be clearer and so a further report would be presented in July 2019.

There was no debate and Members were content to confirm the recommendations of the report.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive agreed the recommendations of the report.

Reason: To update members on the findings and recommendations following the David Lock Associates report of December 2017 on SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation.

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Chairman

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Date