

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil** on **Thursday 1 August 2019**.

(9.30 am - 10.30 am)

Present:

Councillor Peter Seib (Chairman)

Jason Baker
Mike Best
John Clark
Sarah Dyke

Peter Gubbins
Henry Hobhouse
Tony Lock



Also Present:

Michael Lewis

Brian Hamilton

Officers:

Alex Parmley
Netta Meadows
Martin Woods
Paul Fitzgerald
Nicola Hix
Charlotte Jones
Jan Gamon
Rachel Saltonstall
Angela Cox

Chief Executive
Director (Strategy & Support Services)
Director (Service Delivery)
Section 151 Officer
Lead Specialist (Finance)
Lead Specialist (People, Performance & Change)
Lead Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Legal Specialist
Democratic Services Specialist

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

24. Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the District Executive meeting held on 4th July 2019, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and, having been approved as a correct record, were signed by the Chairman.

25. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adam Dance and Val Keitch and Clare Pestell, Director.

26. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

27. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

28. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 5)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

29. Corporate Performance Report 2019-20: 1st Quarter (Agenda Item 6)

The Lead Specialist (People, Performance & Change) advised that the targets had been set for all the Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and these had been agreed with the relevant Portfolio Holders. Some of the measures were new, reflecting the priorities in the new Council Plan. She outlined an error and some clarifications within the report which would be corrected before publication on the website.

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development said he would be reviewing the economy targets with the Director shortly.

The Portfolio Holder for Protecting Core Services advised that measures were in place to monitor the direction of travel for the revenues and benefits service and the development management service and resources had been allocated to those areas. He also requested that a further column be added to the information to show the direction of travel from the previous quarter report.

In response to a question, the Lead Specialist (Finance) and the Director for Service Delivery advised:-

- Work to establish net income targets for service areas for 2019/20 with comparative baselines for 2018/19 was underway and would be available by the end of the month.
- Housing/homeless applications were assessed to identify which should be accelerated due to pressing circumstances. The response time to conduct an interview was currently 27 days which was longer than desired.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Chairman thanked the Lead Specialist (People, Performance & Change) for her presentation. Members were content to note the Corporate Performance Report 2019-20: 1st Quarter.

RESOLVED: That District Executive noted and commented on the Corporate Performance Report 2019-20: 1st Quarter and the new report format.

Reason: To note the current position of the Council's agreed key performance indicators covering the period from April to June 2019 (Q1).

30. 2019/20 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th June 2019 (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman, as Portfolio Holder for Finance, Legal and Democratic Services, advised that the Audit Committee had received the external auditor's formal Audit opinion of the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts and he was pleased to report a very favourable unqualified opinion had been given.

It was noted that officers had attended the Scrutiny Committee meeting and had provided answers to their questions at that meeting. The Scrutiny Committee would be reviewing the Council's Commercial Strategy as part of the District Executive reports in September 2019.

The Chief Executive advised that all of the Council's acquisitions and disposals would be placed on the Members Portal in due course.

During discussion, Members felt caution should be exercised on the release of financial information relating to acquisitions and disposals in case commercially sensitive information could be gathered from the figures. The Council's interests must be protected.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the content of the report;
- b. approve the revised Capital Programme spend profile as detailed in paragraph 7, Table 1.
- c. approve the projects listed on Appendix B remain in the capital programme.

Reason: To note early in-year projection in 2019/20 of the forecast spending ("outturn") against the Council's approved Capital Programme Budget, and to explain projected variations against individual projects and the Programme as a whole.

31. 2019/20 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th June 2019 (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman, as Portfolio Holder for Finance, Legal and Democratic Services, advised that there was a small net forecast overspend of £46,865 (0.3%) for 2019/20 which was within tolerance for the time of year. He explained the car parking variance in table 1 and the additional income generated by treasury interest and income.

It was noted that a written response would be provided to the Scrutiny Committee comments relating to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments.

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Well-Being said he had met with the Manager of the Westland Leisure Complex and Octagon Theatre and was pleased to report that ticket sales were increasing, in some part due to the acts booked by the Manager.

It was proposed that the thanks of the Committee be conveyed to the Manager of the Westland Leisure Complex and Octagon Theatre for his work in promoting the venues and increasing their ticket sales.

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

- A provision was always made in balances against the risk of non-collection of Council Tax however, officers worked hard to reduce it and some debts could take several years to clear by payment plans.
- The service budgets were prepared by the finance team in collaboration with knowledge and expertise from the officers in the service.
- Council Tax was collected by SSDC on behalf of all the precepting authorities, including the County Council, Fire and Police authorities and Town and Parish Councils so although the outstanding debt looked high, the proportion to SSDC was relatively low. Such debts were not written off lightly and only as a last resort.

The Director for Service Delivery advised that there was some difficulty in recruiting Building Control officers and hiring agency staff was costly. However, a Peer Review report was due that week which would help to decide whether SSDC decided to work with the Somerset Building Control Partnership in the future.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Legal and Democratic Services, advised that the outcome of the Fairer Funding Review of Local Government was still not known or how it would affect the Business Rates settlement or New Homes Bonus for the Council.

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

RESOLVED: That District Executive agreed to:-

- a. note the current 2019/20 financial position of the Council;
- b. note the reasons for variations to the previously approved Directorate Budgets as detailed in paragraph 8, Table 1;
- c. note the virements made under delegated authority as detailed in Appendix B; and
- d. note the transfers made to and from reserves outlined in paragraph 27, Table 4 and the position of the Area Reserves as detailed in Appendix C and the Corporate Reserves as detailed in Appendix D.

Reason: To note the current projection of the forecast spending and income ("outturn") against the Council's approved Revenue Budget for the financial year, and to explain projected variations against budget.

32. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 9)

The following additions and amendments to the Forward Plan were noted:

- Provision of Hostel Accommodation and Associated Support for People who are Homeless in South Somerset – removed from Plan
- The Future Management of the Council's Leisure Facilities - September 2019
- Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2020 – 2024 – January 2020

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments:
 - Provision of Hostel Accommodation and Associated Support for People who are Homeless in South Somerset – removed from Plan
 - The Future Management of the Council's Leisure Facilities - September 2019
 - Somerset Waste Partnership Annual Report and Draft Business Plan 2020 – 2024 – January 2020
2. noted the contents of the Consultation Database as shown at Appendix B.

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

33. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 5th September 2019 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