

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **District Executive** held at the **Council Chamber - Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil on Thursday 5 December 2019.**

(9.30 am - 10.16 am)

Present:

Councillor Peter Seib (Chairman)

Jason Baker
John Clark
Sarah Dyke

Peter Gubbins
Tony Lock



Also Present:

Brian Hamilton

Officers:

Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Netta Meadows	Director (Strategy & Support Services)
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Paul Fitzgerald	Section 151 Officer
Nicola Hix	Interim Section 151 Officer
Angela Watson	Monitoring Officer
Jan Gamon	Lead Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Leisa Kelly	Specialist (Strategic Planning)
Barbie Markey	Specialist (Housing)
Richard Birch	Lead Specialist (Communications, Marketing & Media)
Angela Cox	Democratic Services Specialist

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

77. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Best, Adam, Dance, Henry Hobhouse, Val Keitch and Sue Osborne, Vice Chair of Scrutiny Committee.

78. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest made by Members present.

79. Public Question Time (Agenda Item 3)

There were no questions from members of the public present.

80. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 4)

There were no announcements from the Chairman.

81. Somerset Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 - 2023 (Agenda Item 5)

The Chairman introduced the report in the absence of the Portfolio Holder and advised that this was a joint strategy presented in partnership with the other Somerset Councils and covering the whole County area. He noted that there were currently 5 households in the immediate emergency re-homing category, 196 in the Gold Category, and there were 2,035 in all three categories of housing need. He said it demonstrated local need for housing and developers should be pressed to bring forward new housing.

The Case Officer for Service Delivery noted three amendments to the Equality Impact Assessment submitted with the strategy which was one of the reasons why the recommendation was to delegate the final changes to the strategy and action plan to the Director, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Housing.

The Specialist for Housing Service Delivery advised that the Somerset Housing Managers Group met monthly and the strategy and action plan had been a standing agenda item for review at each meeting. On the Housing Register, 1030 people were in need of 1 bed accommodation and 615 were in need of 2 bed accommodation. She said there service worked had to prevent households and individuals from becoming homeless and this was a major part of the action plan within the strategy.

In response to questions, the Housing Service Delivery Specialist advised:-

- The requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 had impacted on officer's workload but more staff were now in place and new case law was being analysed to ensure SSDC complied.
- Universal Credit meant that tenants were responsible for paying their own rent. If a tenant was in arrears or vulnerable so they were unable to pay their landlord direct then there was a possibility to make direct payments.
- Priority 2 in the Strategy provided support for clients to remain in their existing accommodation where appropriate through assistance from a Private Sector Landlord Officer.
- Private Sector Leasing had been investigated but there was a high cost to the Council plus making good any damage by tenants made it unviable.
- The annual count of homeless people had taken place recently and there were 8 people in Yeovil, 7 of which had other options and had refused help.
- Information on what the public could do to help homeless people was due to be released soon.

The Director for Service Delivery said the overriding picture of the housing service was very positive and its figures for homelessness and rough sleeping was the envy of many west country councils. The appointment system for applicants was working well and the MHCLG wished to use the work done in South Somerset as an example to other Councils.

The Chairman asked that a briefing on the Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy be presented to Members including the early intervention measures undertaken to prevent

homelessness. It was also requested that the details of who to contact if a Members came across a homeless person be circulated to all Members.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members unanimously agreed to adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023 subject to any final changes to the strategy and action plan to be delegated to the Director, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Housing.

RESOLVED: That District Executive adopted the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023 subject to any final changes to the strategy and action plan to be delegated to the Director, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Housing.

Reason: To confirm adoption of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019 – 2023

82. Somerset Climate Emergency Framework (Agenda Item 6)

The Portfolio Holder for Environment advised that the report sought to endorse the framework developed to deliver the projects within the Climate Emergency Strategy. She thanked the Lead Specialist for Strategic Planning for leading the development of the framework and noted that there had been a short delay in the community consultation due to the purdah period leading up to the General Election.

The Lead Specialist for Strategic Planning advised that the document outlined the approach being taken to develop the strategy and in order to deliver it by July 2020 it was proposed to delegate the final Framework document and the draft Strategy and Action Plan to be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment. The governance arrangements for the County-Wide Strategy would be reviewed by the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, the Portfolio Holder Group and the Leaders and CEO's Group and the final version of the Strategy would be presented to District Executive and Council before July 2020.

In response to questions from Members, the Lead Specialist for Strategic Planning advised:-

- The final action plans would be tailored to each authority.
- The South Somerset Environment Strategy and the County Environment Strategy were aligned but the County strategy would have a wider remit.

During discussion, Members noted that SCC had a wider remit than SSDC to achieve carbon neutrality and they would take the lead role in those areas, for example, transport, energy and water, although SSDC and the other Somerset District Councils would link into these and work with SCC to find solutions.

At the conclusion of the debate, Members were content to note Climate Change Framework document and agreed that the final Framework document and the draft Strategy and Action Plan may be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

RESOLVED: That District Executive:-

- a. reviewed the Climate Change Framework and intended work streams and provided feedback;
- b. agreed that the final Framework document and the draft Strategy and Action Plan may be signed off by the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

Reason: To confirm the framework for developing the county-wide Climate Strategy.

83. District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda Item 7)

The Section 151 Officer advised that the Capital and Investment Strategies 2020/21 would be presented as one report in the future.

It was noted that the new Recycle More scheme was to be rolled out across the district later in the year and it was requested that a presentation on the scheme be requested from the Somerset Waste Partnership.

RESOLVED: That the District Executive:-

1. approved the updated Executive Forward Plan for publication as attached at Appendix A, with the following amendments:-
 - Update on roll out of Recycle More – TBC
 - Capital and Investment Strategies 2020/21 to be presented as one report – February 2020

Reason: The Forward Plan is a statutory document.

84. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 8)

Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the District Executive would take place on Thursday 9th January 2020 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

