

SWT Executive - 20 November 2019

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby and Francesca Smith

Officers: James Barrah, Nick Bryant, Emily Collacott, Paul Fitzgerald, James Hasset, Laura Higgins, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas, Jane Windebank and Rich Wiseman

Also Present: Councillors Hugh Davies, Janet Lloyd, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor R Lees.

Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 October 2019 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 23 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-	All Items	Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Roberts		Trustee		
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

Public Participation

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

Executive Forward Plan

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

The Section 151 Officer advised that the three finance reports scheduled to be brought to the December Executive meeting, would be amalgamated into one report for the budget update.

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

Resolved that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

Mid-year Budget Monitoring and In Year Budget Request

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the amount of experienced officers that had been lost and the time it would take to replace the knowledge base. But Councillors believed the funding that had been allocated would help.
- Concern was raised on issues that had been reported with Firmstep. It was suggested that an IT Member Working Group was set up and involved as many members as possible to work through the issues.
- The Section 151 Officer gave advice on what the Councillors were responsible for, which included managing the finances and that he was there to give them his professional opinion on the accounts.
- The Chief Executive gave Councillors information on when the Medium Term Financial Plan would be presented to them.

Resolved that Executive:-

- 1) Noted the Council's forecast financial performance for 2019/20 financial year as at 30 September 2019;
- 2) Recommended that Full Council approved a Supplementary Budget of £747,000 in the General Fund Revenue Budget for transitional and service resilience costs in 2019/20, funded from the New Homes Bonus / Growth earmarked reserve;
- 3) Approved a virement within the HRA Revenue Budget of £339,000, from in year underspend and managed savings to transitional and service resilience costs in 2019/20; and

- 4) Noted the risk to funding of future growth programme priorities, and committed to reviewing future options through the budget setting process.

Statement of Community Involvement

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved the proposed response to matters raised by the respondents (as set out in Appendix 1); and
- 2) In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport delegated authority was given to the Head of Strategy and the Principal Planner Specialist to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication.

Local Plan Issues and Options Document

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were pleased with the document and were keen to engage with the community, especially the Town and Parish Councils, to ensure that the local residents were involved in the consultation. They wanted the document to be as inclusive as possible.
- Councillors requested an extension to the consultation deadline to ensure that all the Town and Parish Councils could submit their responses.
- Councillors highlighted that it was good to see that the travel behaviour had been added to the report but mentioned that the rail link from Taunton to Minehead had not been included.
- Councillors queried what the Wellington Place Plan was.
The Head of Strategy advised that it had been an aspiration since the creation of the New Council. Officers wanted to create a vision for the bigger towns in the District to focus on housing, town centres, businesses, which they wanted to set out in separate document for Wellington.
- Councillors queried why Wellington had not been included on the list of train stations that were due to be reopened.
The Head of Strategy advised that there was still a lot of work to be carried out prior to the station being added to the list, but advised that progress was being made.
- Councillors queried why Watchet had been placed in tier four for rural areas when it was a coastal town.
Officers advised that would be in the information included in the consultation and suggested that the Councillors submitted their concerns as part of their response.
- Councillors advised that officers needed to check the document for accessibility before it was published. The colours and fonts used were known to be difficult to read for people with dyslexia.
- Councillors supported the document and thanked the officers for their work.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved the Somerset West and Taunton Local Plan Issues and Options Document for public consultation (Appendix A);

- 2) In consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport, delegated authority was given to the Head of Strategy to make any necessary editorial corrections, minor amendments to the documents, agree the 'summary' section, and to agree the final publication style; and
- 3) Approved to extend the consultation deadline to 16 March 2020 to allow extra time for groups who only meet every quarter to submit their feedback.

Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order - approval for consultation

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked officers for their work and agreed it was a key piece of work for businesses and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development supported the work.
- Concern was raised that there would be two consultations being run at the same time.
- Concern was raised that business units would be built anywhere including in smaller communities.

Officers advised that they had taken an informative approach and that once all the layers of the development order had been applied, it wouldn't allow units to be built anywhere.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Approved the undertaking of a consultation exercise on the possible adoption of a Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order in the Somerset West and Taunton Area, with a further report to be brought to a subsequent meeting of the Executive once the consultation exercise has been completed;
- 2) Approved the contents of the draft consultation document for the consultation exercise on the possible adoption of a Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order;
- 3) Delegated authority to the Head of Strategy to agree any necessary final amendments prior to its publication in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation; and
- 4) Approved to extend the consultation deadline to 16 March 2020 to allow extra time for groups who only meet every quarter to submit their feedback.

North Taunton Woolaway Project | Phase A Update and Home Owner Acquisition budget

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked officers for their work and were glad to see that climate change had been included in the project.
- Councillors highlighted the delicacy of the exercise and commended officers for the way they had undertaken the work.
- Councillors queried how much shorter the project timescale would be.

Officers advised that the original estimate was 10 years but they hoped the opportunity would mean that the work would be completed 1-2 years earlier.

- The Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing advised that she had been involved since the start of the project and highlighted some points from the report which included being shortlisted by the Royal Town Planning Institute for a regional award in planning excellence for Community Involvement.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Delegated the decisions to progress the enabling works for the remaining Phases to the future Director of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing;
- 2) Delegated authority to the future Director of Housing to negotiate and agree the purchase of the 19 private owned homes within Phases B – E of the North Taunton Woolaway Project area;
- 3) Approved a supplementary budget of £5.7 million for Phases B – E of the North Taunton Woolaway Project;
- 4) Approved an additional supplementary budget of £1.5 million for Phase A of the North Taunton Woolaway Project increasing the budget for Phase A from £7.2 million to £8.7 million; and
- 5) The budgets would be funded utilising a combination of capital receipts, Social Housing Development Fund revenue contribution, and capital borrowing. Council delegated the final funding arrangement to be determined by the S151 Officer in line with the Council's capital and treasury strategies, prioritising affordability for the Housing Revenue Account set out in Table 2 in the report.

Access to Information - Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved that the press and public be excluded during consideration of agenda item 12 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during the item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows: The item contained information that could release confidential information that related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was therefore agreed that after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

Somerset Building Control Partnership Draft Variation Agreement

Resolved that the Executive approved the Inter-Authority Agreement for the Building Control Services Partnership.

(The Meeting ended at 7.40 pm)