

**WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL****Minutes of Full Council held on 12 December 2018 at 4.30 pm****Council Chamber - West Somerset House****Present:**

Councillor B Heywood  
Councillor J Parbrook

Chairman  
Vice-Chairman

Councillor I Aldridge  
Councillor B Allen  
Councillor M Chilcott  
Councillor R Clifford  
Councillor H Davies  
Councillor M Dewdney  
Councillor S Dowding  
Councillor A Hadley  
Councillor I Jones  
Councillor B Maitland-Walker

Councillor C Morgan  
Councillor P Murphy  
Councillor P Pilkington  
Councillor S Pugsley  
Councillor R Thomas  
Councillor N Thwaites  
Councillor A Trollope-Bellew  
Councillor K Turner  
Councillor D Westcott  
Councillor R Woods

**Officers in Attendance:**

Krystyna Kowalewska  
Bruce Lang  
Penny James  
Paul Fitzgerald

**C41 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Goss, N Hawkins, R Lillis, K Mills and T Venner.

**C42 Minutes of the previous meeting of the Full Council**

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21 November 2018 circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the inclusion of Councillor B Allen to the list of apologies for absence, the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21 November 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

**C43 Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

| Name                     | Min<br>No. | Member of      | Action Taken    |
|--------------------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Cllr I Aldridge          | All        | Williton       | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr M Chilcott          | All        | SCC            | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr H Davies            | All        | SCC            | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr B Maitland-Walker   | All        | Carhampton     | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr C Morgan            | All        | Stogursey      | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr P H Murphy          | All        | Watchet        | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr J Parbrook          | All        | Minehead       | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr P Pilkington        | All        | Timberscombe   | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr R Thomas            | All        | Minehead       | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew | All        | Crowcombe      | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr K H Turner          | All        | Brompton Ralph | Spoke and voted |
| Cllr D J Westcott        | All        | Watchet        | Spoke and voted |

C44 **Public Participation**

No members of the public spoke at the meeting on any items on the agenda.

C45 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman accompanied Councillor K Turner at Westminster to attend the launch of the Green Cities Initiative. Councillor Turner went on to provide further details about the event.

C46 **Heart of the South West - Joint Committee - Council Update**

(Report No. WSC 92/18, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with a progress report and set out the Heart of the South West Local Industrial Strategy, budget statement for 2018/19 in addition to the budget and cost sharing agreement.

The Leader of Council presented the report and proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor A Hadley.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018 be noted.

**RESOLVED (2)** that it be agreed to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Government).

**RESOLVED (3)** that the Budget statement for 2018/19 set out in Appendix B to the report be noted and that in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established the Shadow Council be asked to make an annual

budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the Taunton Deane and West Somerset 2018/19 contribution. Final clarification on any additional 2019/20 budget requirement to be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/20.

**RESOLVED (4)** that the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to the report be agreed.

C47 **Confirmation of Appointment of Joint Chief Executive**

(Report No. WSC 91/18, circulated with the Agenda.)

In the light of the decision of the Shadow Council to appoint a new Chief Executive designate with effect from 1st January 2019, this report was to enable the Council to regularise the position and formally appoint James Hassett as the Joint Chief Executive for the Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council with effect from 1st January 2019.

The Leader of Council presented the report and thanked the Chief Executive, Penny James, both personally and on behalf of the Council, for all her exceptionally hard work and commitment and for serving West Somerset over the past five years during a very difficult time.

The Leader proposed the recommendation which was duly seconded by Councillor K Turner.

The Monitoring Officer provided clarification on the powers of the Shadow Authority in regards to the appointment of the Joint Chief Executive.

The Leader and Councillor B Allen, who were involved in the interview process, were both in agreement that they were happy with the appointment of James Hassett and were delighted to welcome his brief time in charge of West Somerset Council.

**RESOLVED** that the appointment of James Hassett as Chief Executive (including being Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and a Core Member of the Central Implementation Team) for Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council with effect from 1st January 2019 be confirmed.

C48 **Approval of Funding Request for the Transformation Programme**

(Report No. WSC 93/18, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to request additional funding for the Transformation programme. The revised Business Case increases the savings from £3.1m to £3.5m with a revised investment of circa £9.5m delivering an attractive return of investment whilst protecting front line services and improving the customer experience.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and outlined the details of the report. He went on to propose the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

A lengthy debate ensued and the main points of discussion focussed on:

- Particular points and concerns were raised regarding the budget, design and expertise in relation to the ICT project, and these were answered in detail by officers. There would be no change to the current ICT project plans or to the impact on the users. It was also confirmed that there would be contingency in the budget to enable pre-testing to be undertaken before the new technology went live to the customer.
- It was emphasised that there would be no reduction to service standards and whilst in the short term during transition there could be an impact on front line services, in the long term, transformation should improve the customer experience.
- A written answer would be provided as to which budget would be used to fund the audio visual equipment for the Deane House council chamber.
- The Section 151 Officer responded to a question on savings and highlighted that the revised budget total for the transformation programme was contained within the report and was a good estimate as to what the final position would be.
- The figures contained within the report were welcomed as it was important to understand how much had been spent on the project to date.
- Questions were asked about the Council's ability to now be able to fund the additional spending needed for transformation, and concerns were expressed on the planned use of earmarked reserves.
- An assurance was provided on the process for identifying the reserves, and, as a result of the good financial decisions taken over the last few years by Members, opportunities were being taken to reprioritise and the council was currently in a resilient position to fund an additional one-off cost which would provide ongoing financial benefits to the general fund and the housing revenue account.
- The impact of the inclusion of the DLO in the transformation programme was raised.

**RESOLVED (1)** that an increase to the Transformation Programme Budget of £2.387m be noted, and funding of £507k for West Somerset Council General Fund be approved. (Note £1.277m to be funded by TDBC Council General Fund and £603k by TDBC HRA.).

**RESOLVED (2)** that an increase to service budgets for transitional costs totalling £685k be noted, and funding of £121k for West Somerset Council General Fund be approved. (Note £386k to be funded by TDBC General Fund and £178k for TDBC HRA.)

**RESOLVED (3)** that the proposed increase of the annual savings target by £348k to £3.5m be supported.

**RESOLVED (4)** that it be noted that the Shadow Executive will consider basis for allocating increased savings target within the new Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

In recognition of this being the last meeting which the Chief Executive would attend, the Chairman took the opportunity to express his sincere appreciation and thanked Penny for her achievements and long service to both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council presenting her with a gift and wishing her well for the future.

The Meeting closed at 5.59 pm