

SWT Executive - 20 October 2021

- Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Derek Perry, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley, Mike Rigby and Andrew Sully
- Officers: Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Paul Fitzgerald, Clare Rendell and Kevin Williams
- Also Present: Councillors Simon Coles, Tom Deakin, Habib Farbahi, John Hassall, Libby Lisgo, Dave Mansell, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

46. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Booth, Marcus Kravis and Fran Smith.

47. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 15 September 2021 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 15 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

48. 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 S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-	All Items	Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Roberts		Trustee		
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
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

49. **Public Participation**

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

50. **Executive Forward Plan**

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

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.

51. **Establishment of a Joint Committee in Somerset for the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors agreed that the five councils needed to work together to get the best outcome.
- Councillors queried whether the Joint Committee meetings would be held in public session.
The Leader advised that the meetings would be open to the public to attend.
- Councillors queried whether the Joint Scrutiny Committee, once established, would just carry on into the New Council.
The Leader advised that the joint committees being established would only be in operation until the New Council had been created.
- Councillors highlighted that a resolution had been passed by Full Council to recommend that a committee system be used for the Unitary Authority and that they did not want to lose sight of that recommendation.
The Leader advised that the work carried out on the Constitution would be completed by the Shadow Council, so we could only recommend to that Working Group the adoption of a committee system.
- Councillors were reassured that the vice chair of the Joint Committee would be a District Leader and that the quorate figures would include district members.
- Concern was raised that action was not being taken now.
The Leader advised that there were many different work programs being set up and that officers were carrying out work, but that it was still early days.

- Concern was raised on the rumours that Somerset County Council would remain as the continuing authority and that there would be no Shadow Council and that the district councils would simply be abolished.
- Councillors wanted to work together to ensure that the best outcomes were achieved for the residents. Councillors also wanted to look after the officers throughout the process to ensure that they were best placed in the New Council.
- Councillors advised that the Leader of the County Council had publicly announced who the members of the Joint Committee were and that the vice chair would be a District Leader.
The Leader was glad that a public announcement had been made on the committee composition.
- Councillors queried what would be included in the Structural Change Order (SCO) and what progress was being made on the Joint Scrutiny Committee.
The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that the SCO would detail the composition of the Executive, who would replace the Joint Committee. The SCO would also extend the matters Executive dealt with within the Scheme of Delegations. He advised that work was being carried out to establish a Joint Scrutiny Committee and that a report would be brought through the democratic pathway soon.
- Concern was raised that district councillors would not be involved in the process or have a voice on the decisions being made. They queried how the Leader would ensure that didn't happen.
The Leader advised that she was keen to continue with the Group Leader meetings and member briefings to ensure that as much information as possible was distributed to councillors.
- Councillors queried how a continuing authority would work.
The Leader suggested a member briefing could be held to explain.
- Concern was raised on the process and the lack of detail known until the SCO was released.
The Leader appreciated councillors concern and explained that the work being carried out was about protecting services, residents and officers and that she would do her best to give the District a voice in the process.

Resolved that the Executive agreed to the establishment of a Local Government Reorganisation joint committee (the LGR Joint Committee) together with the county and district councils in Somerset constituted in accordance with, and having the functions set out in, the terms of reference attached at Appendix 1 (“Terms of Reference”).

(The Meeting ended at 7.00 pm)