

SWT Executive - 9 February 2022

Present: Councillor Derek Perry (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillors Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Mike Rigby and Andrew Sully

Officers: James Barrah, Chris Hall, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Paul Fitzgerald, Emily Collacott and Clare Rendell

Also Present: Councillors Norman Cavill, Roger Habgood, John Hassall, Dawn Johnson, Libby Lisgo, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

85. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Fran Smith and Federica Smith-Roberts.

86. 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 N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Johnson	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

87. Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or

petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16

Mr House submitted the following question in regard to agenda item 4, Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23:-

In the new world of a Somerset Unitary Council, there would be a shortfall of public toilets in the centre of Taunton, closed toilets Victoria Park, Bus Station, High Street with scope for more at Firepool with an amphitheatre or Coal Orchard with a waterside boating feature. The capital cost of these would fall to a new parish body for the town.

From the experience of the Unitary changes in Dorset effecting the new Weymouth Town Council in the January meetings before their inception in April 2019 - design work was underway, and funding allocated (circa £600k) by the outgoing Weymouth and Portland Borough Council to construct new seafront toilets at Weymouth. This was for the new Town Council to operate once finished after the due transfer date. So, a useful precedent for our town centre public toilets.

This year was the last chance to include district council funding for rebuilding of our Taunton public toilets. The new Weymouth Council had to increase its first precept by 10% for the first three years in order to build up its new capital reserves. A similar case for Taunton Town would restrict it from raising capital funds for Toilets at the outset.

Could any capitol funds be allocated to future Taunton Public Toilets, so design work could start, allowing funds to be pass-ported through for construction to help the fledgling council.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services gave the following response:- Executive this evening was considering the budget for 2022/23, this report had taken considerable work to bring forward and I am not minded consider in the moment a capital request that would destabilise this work. As portfolio holder I would consider this request and provide a written response against the various needs of the district.

88. Draft General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Estimates 2022/23

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors agreed that the officers had worked hard to produce a fiscally prudent budget.
- Councillors were pleased to see that key projects would still be delivered within the budget.
- Councillors queried why the work to create a Town Council for Taunton had not been included in the budget. They requested reassurance that it would not hinder the work needed to be carried out.
The Section 151 Officer advised that the decision to create a Town Council had not yet been signed off and that he would include a note in the report to explain the current position for the Full Council agenda.
- Concern was raised that the budget was for one year only and had included use of the reserve due to the creation on the New Council.

- Councillors wanted reassurance that assets were financed, and key projects would be protected.
- Concern was raised that the car park income was not monitored. *The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources advised that the car park data had been gathered but that it had been impacted by the Covid Pandemic. The Chief Executive advised that the car park income was monitored due to funding being claimed from Central Government, which meant a detailed analysis was gathered on the income.*
- Councillors queried whether Somerset West and Taunton Council would contribute to the cost of the formation of a Town Council for Taunton. *The Section 151 Officer advised that the process of creating a Town Council would receive input from the New Council. The Chief Executive advised that the reserve level was above minimum to allow for the work dependant on what would be decided, however it would be for the New Council to set the budget and to see what services the Town and Parish Councils would undertake going forward which included asset transfer.*
- Councillors requested if the income for car parks could be broken down into towns, so that they could identify which areas were struggling.
- Councillors were pleased to see that the Brewhouse was still being supported.

Resolved that:-

- 2.1 The Executive recommended Full Council approved the Revenue Budget, Council Tax Rate and Capital Programme for 2022/23 and Supplementary Budget in 2021/22 including:
 - a) Draft Revenue Net Budget of £17.018m for 2022/23.
 - b) The basic Somerset West and Taunton Band D Council Tax rate of £174.63 for 2022/23.
 - c) General Fund 2022/23 Capital Programme additions totalling £1.728m and 2022/23 Capital Programme Revisions of -£0.181m for previously approved schemes for 2022/23, as set out in Table 18.
 - d) A Supplementary Budget in 2021/22 of £1m for additional capital debt repayment funded from General Reserves.
 - e) The release of the £2.4m 2021/22 Budget Volatility and Risk Reserve with £0.4m transferred to General Reserves and £2m to fund a supplementary increase in the Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay budget in order to finance capital expenditure in 2021/22.
 - f) £570k was transferred from the 2021/22 budget to the Capital Financing Reserve to fund the increase to the Car Park Improvement Project capital budget in 2022/23.
- 2.2 The Executive recommended delegating authority to the S151 Officer to approve the CIL capital grants budgets to reflect in-year CIL capital receipts passed to town and parishes in line with the CIL policy.

(The Meeting ended at 6.55 pm)

