

SWT Full Council - 8 February 2022

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Chris Booth, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Tom Deakin, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Steve Griffiths, Roger Habgood, Barrie Hall, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Dawn Johnson, Marcus Kravis, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Andy Milne, Simon Nicholls, Derek Perry, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: James Barraah, Lesley Dolan, Paul Fitzgerald, Chris Hall, Tracey Meadows, Andrew Pritchard, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell and John Rendell

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

78. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors M Blaker, A Hadley, M Hill, J Hunt, R Lees, C Morgan, C Palmer, M Peters, F Smith-Roberts and K Wheatley.

79. **Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council**

(Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 7 December 2021 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of Full Council held on 7 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

80. **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 L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter	Personal	Spoke and Voted

		Trustee		
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Deakin	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Johnson	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrowe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	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 V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Venner	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Councillor M Kravis further declared a pecuniary interest on agenda item 10 and would leave the room during the debate.

81. Public Participation

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

82. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair of the Council wished to pass on her condolences to Councillor F Smith and Councillor F Smith-Roberts on the passing of a close relative.

The Chair congratulated Councillor F Smith-Roberts on the birth of her twins in January 2022.

The Chair also advised councillors that if they were standing for the Unitary Elections in May 2022, there would be two candidate sessions held on 23 February and 2 March 2022, if they wished to gain further information on becoming a unitary councillor.

83. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

There were no announcements made by the Leader of the Council.

84. **To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in regard to Procedure Rule 13.

85. **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue and Capital Budget Setting 2022/23 including Dwelling Rent Setting 22/23, MTFP Update and 30-Year Business Plan Review**

During the discussion the following points were made:-

- Councillors agreed that officers had done a very good job on producing the budget papers especially for a challenging environment such as housing and construction.
- Councillors were proud of the work achieved in the zero-carbon sector of the department.
- The Portfolio Holder for Housing thanked all councillors for their support.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(i), the Chair called for a recorded vote to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The recommendations, which are detailed below, were put and were **CARRIED** with thirty-seven Councillors in favour and eight abstaining:-

2.1.1 To approve the HRA Annual Revenue Budget for 2022/23.

2.1.2 To approve the increase of 4.1% (CPI+1%) to Dwelling Rents for 2022/23.

2.1.3 To approve the HRA Capital Programme for 2022/23.

- 2.1.4 To note the reviewed and updated assumptions in the 5-Year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 2.1.5 To note the reviewed and updated assumptions in the 2021 HRA 30-Year Business Plan.

Those voting **FOR** the **MOTION**: Councillors I Aldridge, B Allen, L Baker, C Booth, S Buller, D Darch, H Davies, T Deakin, D Durdan, K Durdan, C Ellis, H Farbahi, E Firmin, A Govier, S Griffiths, J Hassall, D Johnson, M Kravis, S Lees, L Lisgo, M Lithgow, J Lloyd, D Mansell, S Nicholls, D Perry, H Prior-Sankey, A Pritchard, M Rigby, F Smith, A Sully, R Tully, T Venner, S Wakefield, D Wedderkopp, B Weston, L Whetlor and G Wren.

Those **ABSTAINING** from voting: Councillors M Barr, N Cavill, R Habgood, A Milne, S Pugsley, V Stock-Williams, N Thwaites and A Trollope-Bellew.

86. **External Auditor Appointment Procurement Process**

During the discussion, the following point was made:-

- Councillors agreed that the auditors had performed very well and that it was a good code of practice for the appointment to go through the procurement process.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 2.1 Accepted Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.
- 2.2 Delegated authority to the S151 Officer to sign the Notice of Acceptance of the invitation to opt in.
- 2.3 Noted that newly established local government bodies had the right to opt into PSAA's scheme under Regulation 10 of the Appointing Person Regulations 2015, which would enable the new unitary council to consider opting in to PSAA scheme or making alternative arrangements when legally constituted.

87. **Licensing Policies for the Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005**

Councillor M Kravis left the room for the item.

Resolved that Full Council approved the two policies proposed at Appendices 1 and 2.

88. **Changes to the Constitution**

Councillor M Kravis returned to the room.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried why the report had not been taken to a Scrutiny Committee for debate.
The Governance Specialist advised the correct democratic pathway for any changes to the Constitution, was the Audit and Governance

Committee followed by Full Council. The report was taken to the Audit and Governance Committee on 13 December 2021.

- Councillors queried why the number of signatures for a petition needed to be raised. Concern was raised that it would lead to fewer petitions being submitted and exclude certain groups from making contact with Full Council.

The Deputy Leader advised that a balance needed to be struck with the figures used. He also advised that it would be good practice to align with the figures used by the other councils in Somerset. However, at this time, he was happy to keep the figure at 200 signatures.

- Councillors queried a section of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Phosphates Sub-Committee, which related to who could be a member of the sub-committee. The current ToR stated that only members of the Planning Committee could be a member of the sub-committee, however, they knew of members of the sub-committee that were not members of the Planning Committee.

The Deputy Leader advised that it was not good practice to have non Planning Committee members on the sub-committee but was happy to have a discussion to resolve the matter.

- Councillors requested clarification on the term 'Motion' used in different sections of the Constitution and what was the difference between a Motion submitted in advance and a Motion proposed during a debate.

Clarification was given.

- Councillors queried what the asterix meant in some of the titles of the Constitution.

The Governance Specialist advised that those rules marked with an asterix applied to Council and to the Committees.

- Councillors highlighted what they believed to be an error in the section on Petitions on page 318 of the agenda, which related to forwarding on some petitions to the County Council.

This was an error and would be removed.

- Some concern was raised on why the Constitution was being amended in the last year of the Council.

Councillors advised that the Constitution was a 'living' document and could be updated at any point to ensure the smooth running of council business.

- The Chair agreed a 10-minute adjournment to allow for a resolution on the query raised on members of the Phosphate Sub-Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 7.05pm.

The meeting restarted at 7.15pm.

The Chair confirmed the following corrections that would be included in the amendments to the Constitution:-

- The number of signatures required for a petition to be valid, would remain at 200.
- The time for a proposer of a motion would remain at 10 minutes.
- Two slight revisions were made in respect of Appendix C1 and C2 pertaining to the Council Procedure Rules. The first was in respect of 26.5 and the language inserted around the Appointment of Substitute Members

of Committees. The purpose of these was to correct minor errors or aid in refining procedure.

- The following amendment would be made to the ToR for the Phosphates Sub-Committee:-

The sub-committee may, by majority vote, co-opt up to 2 further councillors to be members of the sub-committee provided that they were suitably qualified substitutes for the purpose of the Planning Committee. Co-opted Members were not entitled to vote.

Resolved that Full Council accepted the proposals, with amendments, from the Deputy Monitoring Officers (DMOs) and delegated to the DMOs the amendments to give effect to the proposals.

89. **To consider reports from Executive Councillors**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors raised concern that on page 377 of the agenda, it only appeared to mention Taunton in the works around Town Centres and that there should be information on Wellington and Minehead.
- Councillors also mentioned that updates on the Wellington Partnership had not been included in the Employment Skills section on page 381 of the agenda.

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development agreed they were both good points made and that he would include an update in his next report.

- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation for his comments on the High Street Health Checks.
- Councillors chased information they had requested on the members of the Innovation Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development would resend the information to councillors.

(The Meeting ended at 7.25 pm)