

SWT Executive - 20 July 2022

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Derek Perry, Benet Allen, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Francesca Smith and Andrew Sully

Officers: Chris Hall, Andrew Pritchard, Paul Fitzgerald, Clare Rendell, Chris Brown, Kerry Prisco, Lauren Finimore, Malcolm Riches and Graeme Thompson

Also Present: Councillors Norman Cavill, Libby Lisgo and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

115. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors C Booth, M Rigby and S Wakefield.

116. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 15 June 2022 and 5 July 2022 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 15 June 2022 and 5 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

117. 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 N Cavill	All Items	SCC & West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Darch	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Perry	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Sully	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

118. Public Participation

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

119. 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.

120. Connecting our Garden Communities - public consultation

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried work being carried out on bicycle maintenance sites within the Taunton town centre and whether this work was included in the project.
The Strategy Specialist advised that bicycle maintenance sites were part of a separate project, which was investigating different options for locations.
- Councillors suggested that 'paid for' bicycle storage could be used to ensure the storage was more secure.
The Chief Executive advised that bicycle storage was being factored into the provision as part of the car parks redesign project.
- The Leader of the Council understood that the report was only focused on the Garden Town, but that she would like to see the work rolled out across the District.
- Councillors queried whether the project had taken into account the outlying areas of Taunton.
The Strategy Specialist advised that the boundaries had been set for the original plans but that they would link to the countywide travel plans.
- Councillors suggested that work could be done to improve existing pathways to limit costs for the project.
- Councillors highlighted that the Risk Assessment was worth a read because it included information about urban extensions and ensuring the correct infrastructure was implemented.
- Councillors thanked officers for all their work.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Approved the Connecting our Garden Communities draft plan for public consultation.
- 2.2 Agreed that responsibility for any minor textual and visual changes and enhancements prior to publication for consultation were delegated to the Director for Development and Place and Climate Change in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.

121. **Information Management Policies**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors queried whether the Policies were included within staff inductions and continued training programmes.
The Information and Records Manager advised that the Policies had been included in staff inductions and that they would include them in the ongoing work for Local Government Reorganisation.
- Councillors queried how the Policy would be rolled out to all councillors.
The Portfolio Holder for Communications and Corporate Resources advised that there would be member briefings on the Policies and that the information would be available on the councillors' mobile devices to refer to.
- Councillors felt very reassured that the Policies were being brought forward, as General Data Protection Regulations were important.
- Councillors queried how the 5% was selected to be sent to record storage.
The Information and Records Manager advised that items of archival value would be chosen and stored at the Heritage Centre.
- Councillors requested that they retained access to their Somerset West and Taunton Council email folders into the New Unitary Council, as they might need to link back to casework submitted prior to April 2023.

Resolved that the Executive sign off all three Information Management Policies (Information and Records Management Policy, Digital Information Policy and Digital Information and Records Management Policy for Councillors) and champion their adherence, to ensure we were compliant as a local authority under the rules of Records Management and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), in relation to how we held, handled, and stored our Corporate Data.

122. **Corporate Performance Report, Outturn and Quarter 4 2021/22**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors agreed that the report demonstrated good overall performance, however, there were some areas that required improvement.
- Councillors were aware of the outside challenges that faced the Council.
- Councillors thanked the officers for all their hard work in providing services for the local area.

Resolved that Executive noted the Council's performance report for 2021/22.

123. **Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring - Outturn Position 2021/22**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked officers for the inclusion of the comments made by the Community Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillors agreed that it had been a challenging year for the HRA for many reasons.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Noted the reported Housing Revenue Account Budget underspend of £170k in 2021/22 and the HRA General Reserves Balance of £3.413m as at 31 March 2022.
- 2.2 Noted the Capital Outturn position.
- 2.3 Approved the proposed reductions to the Capital Programme Budget of £11.847m for underspends on schemes where budget was no longer required, and the continuation of £95.022m approved budget rolled forward for the 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme (as per Appendix A).

124. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - Appendices Only**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next items of business (Agenda Item 11 – Appendix E and F only, Agenda Item 12 – Appendix C only, Agenda Item 13 – Appendix 3, 4 and 5 only) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

125. **General Fund Financial Monitoring - Outturn Position 2021/22**

During the discussion, the following point was raised:-

- Councillors agreed that there were some ambitious targets set for the year.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- a) Noted the reported General Fund Revenue Budget underspend of £2.349m in 2021/22 and the General Reserves Balance of £7.592m as at 31 March 2022.
- b) Noted the S151 has approved General Fund Revenue Budget carry forwards totalling £735,400 as detailed in Appendix A.
- c) Approved an additional General Fund Revenue Budget carry forward of £1,339,320 for items greater than £150,000 as detailed in Section 7.
- d) Approved the transfer of £455,764, with respect to S106 monies, to the Capital Funding earmarked reserve to be available to finance capital projects in 2022/23.
- e) Noted the Capital Outturn position.
- f) Approved the proposed reductions to the Capital Programme Budget of £35.312m for underspends on schemes where budget was no longer required, and the continuation of £60.977m approved budget rolled forward for the 2022/23 General Fund Capital Programme. Please see Appendix C and confidential Appendix F.
- g) Recommend Full Council approved a reduction of £35m to the Approved Borrowing Limit in the Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategies reflecting reduction in capital financing requirement for expenditure no longer required.

126. **Oake Woolaway Housing Refurbishments**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were very happy to support the recommendations.
- Councillors were pleased to see the improvement works being carried out on the properties.
- Councillors queried why zero carbon options could not be used as part of the improvements in the short term.
The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that cost was a factor and that they were spreading funds across the district to improve as many homes as possible.
- Councillors queried whether any of the properties were occupied.
The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that seven out of the ten properties were occupied. There was a programme set to help keep residents in the area through the decant process. The plan was to improve the three empty properties first as they had been vacant for some time.
- Councillors agreed it was a very positive project.

Resolved that the Executive recommended to Full Council the following:-

1. Full Council approved the refurbishment and associated works for ten Woolaway homes at Oake which are currently classified as defective non-traditional dwellings.
2. Full Council approved a Supplementary Budget as noted in Confidential Appendix C within the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, which was planned to be funded primarily through capital borrowing plus available capital grants.
3. Full Council delegated authority to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Director for Housing and Communities to determine the final optimum financing arrangements for expenditure incurred.

127. **Proposed General Consent and Specific Consents process in response to Direction issued under Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007**

During the discussion, the following point was raised:-

- Councillors agreed it was a reasonable set of recommendations to ensure continuity going into the New Unitary Council.

Resolved that the Executive noted the following recommendations that were considered and approved by Somerset County Council Executive on 15 June 2022:

1. The General Consents that Somerset County Council (SCC) intended to grant to the District Councils under the Direction made under Section 24 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as set out in Appendix 2;
2. That delegated authority to grant specific consents under the Section 24 Direction would be given to:

- i. the SCC Lead Member for Resources in conjunction with the SCC Section 151 Officer for all specific consents between £500,000 and £5,000,000; and
 - ii. the SCC Section 151 Officer in consultation with the SCC Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officers of the District Councils for all specific consents up to £499,999.
3. The intention that SCC Executive approved in principle the specific consent for the proposals set out in Appendix 6 relating to a Levelling Up bid.
4. The intention to delegate authority to the SCC Section 151 Officer to agree minor changes to the General Consents in consultation with the SCC Lead Member for Resources
5. That any specific consents over £5,000,000 would need to be considered by either the Leader of SCC or the SCC Executive.

(The Meeting ended at 7.15 pm)