
FULL COUNCIL SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Wednesday, 18 December 2024

Item No.	Title
6	<p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme and Exceptional Hardship Policy 2025-26</p>
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Liz Leyshon proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Bill Revans.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Agree and approve the increase to income band thresholds by the September 2024 CPI rate of 1.7% in line with the percentage increase to state benefits as implemented by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). 2) Agree for the Leader to write to the Minister for Local Government to explore the case for Somerset Council's Council Tax to be raised by more than the referendum limit, due to Exceptional Financial Support, low Council Tax base and rate, increasing demand, and taking into account Government's requirement that plans be in place to protect vulnerable people. 3) Agree and approve the CTR and associated EH scheme for 2025/26 as set out in this paper. 4) Conditional upon the Local Government Financial Settlement, and associated Household Support Fund announcement, this Council commit itself to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further increased support to the Exceptional Hardship fund to target help at those impacted by those changes - with particular attention given to households identified as disproportionately affected. 2. Include details regarding information and signposting to additional support through both council tax billing documents and through making additional contact with every impacted household. <p>The Council further agree that, should additional funding capacity become available and the budget balanced in a sustainable way, the impact of those changes would be</p>

	addressed to minimise or if possible remove them through the provision of a one-off grant or similar.
7	Non-Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship Policy 2025-26
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Liz Leyshon proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Bill Revans.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approve that the Non-Domestic Rating Discretionary Rate Relief and Hardship policy is amended to prevent Private Schools from applying for assistance in anticipation of the changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The recommended wording was to be found in Appendix D of the policy and stated: 'The ratepayer must not fall within the definition of a Private School. For business rates purposes, 'Private Schools' were defined by HM Treasury as schools at which full time education was provided for pupils of compulsory school age where fees were payable.' 2) Delegate authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer to make any additional amendments as necessary to ensure the wording aligned with that Act once such amendments came into force. 3) Approve to reduce the relief percentage within the policy for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector for 2025/26 from 75% to 40% as a result of changes to Central Government policy. 4) Approve to end Local Newspaper Relief in line with Central Government policy.
8	HRA sewage treatment tank replacements using MHCLG Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund Grant
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to the program of PSTP replacements where costs for the program were equal to or below the value of the LNMF funding received. • Approve a supplementary budget of £1m to the HRA Capital Programme, that would be fully funded by the MHCLG Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund.
9	Annual Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2024-25
	DECISION

	<p>Councillor Liz Leyshon proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Diogo Rodrigues.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Approve the mid-year borrowing and investment position and that all treasury activities had been carried out in accordance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy, within the Prudential Limits, and in line with the full delegations to the Section 151 officer. b) Approve the report as being in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management. c) Approve the revised Flexible Capital Receipts Policy for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as set out as Appendix B.
11	Chief Executive's Pay Award 2024/25
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Theo Butt Philip proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Bill Revans.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to approve the award of a 2.5% pay increase to the Chief Executive for 2024/25.</p>
12	Report of the Monitoring Officer
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Bill Revans proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Mandy Chilcott.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper A Approve the appointment of Councillor Steven Pugsley to the vacancy on the Scrutiny Committee - Corporate and Resources and to appoint Councillor Pugsley as the Chair of the committee. To also approve the removal of Councillor Diogo Rodrigues from the committee and be replaced by Councillor Bob Filmer. • Paper B Note the decision taken by the Chief Executive on 30 October 2024 to grant a leave of absence for Councillor Slocombe. • Paper C Note the recent by-election results and the changes to the political balance of the Council.
13	Review of Part B of the Council's Constitution - Retention of Committee Meeting Recordings

	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Theo Butt Philip proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Emily Pearlstone.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to consider the review of Part B and approve the proposed amendments set out in Appendices 2 and 3.</p>
14	Motions
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Motion A</p> <p>Councillor David Woan proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Oliver Patrick.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs expressing concern about the impact of the Government's tax changes on the future of farming in Somerset.</p> <p>Motion B</p> <p>Councillor Faye Purbrick proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Lucy Trimnell.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declare opposition to the Labour Government's changes to inheritance tax affecting family farms. • Write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and the DEFRA Secretary, along with all Somerset MPs, outlining our opposition to this tax change and the scale of the impact to Somerset and our rural economy. • Advocate through all available means for the continued APR exemption of family farms to preserve the UK's food security, our rural communities, and environmental initiatives. <p>Motion C</p> <p>Councillor Lucy Trimnell proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Faye Purbrick.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Recognise and note the significant contribution made to our local economy and food supplies by our hard-working farmers, particularly our meat and dairy producers who account for the majority of Somerset farming produce. 2) Strengthen our partnerships with arable, livestock, and dairy farmers to support and enhance Somerset's iconic countryside

	<p>and would seek to oppose unnecessary additional pressures such as the hike in employers National Insurance contributions and Inheritance Tax on farmers.</p> <p>3) Make a commitment to support local farmers, growers, and the food and drink sector by ensuring, where possible, that food and beverages served at council-organised events were sourced from local suppliers. This would include meat and dairy, alongside fruit, vegetable and cereal products, reflecting the full diversity of Somerset's agricultural output.</p> <p>4) As part of Somerset Council's efforts to address environmental priorities, the Council would explore ways to encourage residents to shop locally whenever possible. This would include promoting home-grown, affordable, and nutritious produce to reduce food miles, boost the local economy, and support our farming community.</p>
15	Report of the five Scrutiny Committees
	<p>DECISION</p> <p>Councillor Leigh Redman proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Henry Hobhouse.</p> <p>Having been duly proposed and seconded, the Council Resolved to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note the report; and b) That the Constitution Part 6 – Scrutiny Terms of Reference be amended as follows: 1.17 REPORTING: A Scrutiny Committee could report and make recommendations to the Leader, the Executive or the Council, as appropriate, and to partner public bodies involved with Community Safety or the NHS. Each Committee report annually to Full Council on its work, its future work programme and recommendations for improving the way it carries out its functions, if appropriate.