

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton TA1 1HE, on Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Bill Revans (Chair)
Cllr Liz Leyshon (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Theo Butt Philip	Cllr Adam Dance
Cllr Dixie Darch	Cllr Heather Shearer
Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts	Cllr Sarah Wakefield
Cllr Richard Wilkins	Cllr Ros Wyke

In attendance:

Cllr Steve Ashton	Cllr Mandy Chilcott
Cllr Andy Dingwall	Cllr Frances Nicholson
Cllr Fran Smith	Cllr Mike Stanton
Cllr David Woan	

Other Members present remotely:

Cllr John Cook-Woodman	Cllr Bob Filmer
Cllr Mark Healey	Cllr Dawn Johnson
Cllr Val Keitch	Cllr Andy Kendall
Cllr Tony Lock	Cllr Sue Osborne
Cllr Jo Roundell Greene	Cllr Rosemary Woods

11 Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item 1

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Apologies were received from Associate Lead Member for Climate Change and Travel, Cllr Oliver Patrick and Associate Lead Member for Culture & Leisure, Cllr Nicola Clark.

11 Minutes from the Previous Meeting - Agenda Item 2

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Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 7 February 2024 be confirmed as a correct record.

11 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 3

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The following declarations of interest were automatically recorded:

Theo Butt-Philip - Wells City Council

Adam Dance - South Petherton Parish Council

Heather Shearer -Street Parish Council

Federica Smith-Roberts - Taunton Town Council

Richard Wilkins - Curry Rivel Parish Council

Ros Wyke - Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

11 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

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The Leader of Council welcomed Nigel Behan and his question was taken at the start of Agenda item 7. The question and response provided are attached to the minutes in Annex A.

11 Executive Forward Plan - Agenda Item 5

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The Executive noted the Forward Plan.

11 Somerset Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2023 - Agenda Item 6

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The Lead Member for Public Health, Equality and Diversity, Cllr Adam Dance, presented the report explaining that it set out what the Council now needed to focus upon. Cllr Dance highlighted that one advantage of the new unitary authority was having the opportunity to have joined up housing and Public Health and even licensing policies and the ability to have planners working alongside housing officers to maximise the health and wellbeing of local people with housing for the long term.

The Executive Director for Public Health, Professor Trudi Grant, provided details of the report which was then discussed and the following points were made with responses being provided by the Executive Director: housing and homes were an important foundation for health and wellbeing they were looking to influence the new Local Plan, which had to be in place by 2028; that the report took a high level look at housing under the three heading of - Stable homes, Good quality and suitable homes and Healthy neighbourhoods; it was pointed out that there were in fact 2

local plans as part of the county came under the Exmoor Local Plan; it was highlighted that Somerset had an increasing number of older adults living in under occupied properties and there was a need to see what sort of accommodation, if they wished to move, they would like to move into to e.g. smaller houses or bungalows, Members felt that there was a need for more bungalow type accommodation, particularly in rural locations; that the new Public Health Ambassador programme was part of the new target operating model put in place last year, it tried to put in place connections across the Council to help maximise the benefits to public health through different types of policy; that whilst there were standards to meet regarding damp and mould in council and social housing, private landlords also had a duty and if they failed to take action it should be reported to the Council; timescales for the investigation and resolution of complaints; the registering of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs); and after it was explained that the broad principles of Health Determinants Research Collaborative (HDRC) were about being by evidence informed and research active where we didn't have the evidence. It was suggested that in recommendation No. 9 rather than use its abbreviation Health Determinants Research Collaborative should be written out in full.

The Leader of Council suggested that this would be a good thing to have on the agendas of all Local Community Networks to help people get an understanding of the strategic picture. Noting the comments made he proposed the recommendations with 'plan' amended to 'plans', to acknowledge that Somerset had more than one local plan, and with 'HDRC' replaced with 'Health Determinants Research Collaborative'.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive agreed to note and endorse the following recommendations:

- 1. To maximise opportunities to join up and integrate commissioning and delivery of supported housing and support services to better serve people with multiple complex needs.**
- 2. To ensure the new Local Plans give significant attention to current and future demographic trends and the related housing needs. Innovate solutions to the development of more one and two-bedroom homes, affordable homes, housing stability and homes built to accommodate future health needs are required.**
- 3. That the Council and Integrated Care Board prioritise collaborative work to address the needs of people who experience multiple disadvantage.**

- 4. To recommended that the Integrated Care Board continues to develop the Inclusion Health Service and develops an overarching Somerset Inclusive Health Strategy.**
- 5. To recommended that Somerset Integrated Care System adopt a collaborative approach to reducing injuries and falls overall and in the home, including continuing to provide support for retrofit interventions and housing adaptations that enable people to live safely in their homes.**
- 6. To maintain support for approaches such as Personalised Care that seek to wrap individualised support around a person in their current place of residence to reduce the risk of needs escalating.**
- 7. That a communications plan is developed to raise awareness among the public of the need to plan ahead for ageing in their home or moving to a more suitable home when the time is right, to reduce the number of people in homes in Somerset that are difficult to live in into old age.**
- 8. That the council commits to, and supports, the development of the Public Health Ambassador Programme.**
- 9. That the Council embeds the Health Determinants Research Collaborative and its principles into the new Target Operating Model for the Council going forwards.**
- 10. That Somerset Council adopts a strong “health in all policies” approach to Neighbourhood Plans, the new Local Plans and Transport Plans, embedding consideration of local health needs when developing and implementing the plans, and seeking to design neighbourhoods that improve health, support community resilience and reduce the risks and impact of climate change.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

The Leader invited Nigel Behan to speak. Mr Behan raised a number of questions regarding Adults Services budgets and spend and a response was provided by the Lead Member for Adults Services, Cllr Sarah Wakefield.

The Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, explained that the report which projected an overspend of £16.3 million for the current financial year, which equated to 3% of the net budget.

It was noted that this was a small improvement of £1.2 million from the previous forecast overspend at Quarter 3. The Lead Member then handed over to the Service Director for Finance & Procurement, Nicola Hix who then summarised the report.

In response to a question as to why the 'Movement from Month 9' column on the table on page 59 of the report were all zeros, the Lead Member for Adult Services, Cllr Sarah Wakefield, responded noting that as a part of an on-going peer review work was being undertaken to ensure that all care packages were safe, effective and met the needs of the of the persons concerned, and also were properly costed. The Service Director for Finance & Procurement undertook to provide members with further information detailing the reason behind the figures in the table.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive:

Noted that the forecast overspend of £16.3m (3.0%) for the year and the recovery action being taken and mitigations put in place to address this.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

12 Corporate Performance Report Q3 - Agenda Item 8

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The Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, introduced the report and handed over to the Service Director for Strategy & Performance, Sara Cretney, who presented the report which showed a positive picture with an increase in the number of green indicators from 19 to 28 and a decrease of red indicators from 17 to 5. She explained that whilst this was an interim reporting process, as they were bringing together services across Somerset Council, they were also working on a much more integrated performance risk and budget reporting corporate performance framework

The Leader of Council opened up meeting for discussion and the following points were made: there would likely to be some changes to performance levels due to the

recently agreed budget decisions and the Council's transformation process; that impacts would be tracked alongside the monitoring of staff welfare; that there was the potential for reductions, adaptations or cessation of some services and these would be clearly indicated to members to allow informed decisions to be made; that as a part of the transformation process consideration would be given to how technology could be used and how systems were set up; in response to concerns over complaints and the number of telephone calls answered from end to end it was explained that whilst complaints fell under Community Services for reporting, they actually related to all of the Council's services and that as such this would be further considered and reported back to the Executive; that the results of the peer review taking place this week should be received within a month and would be made a public document; a question was raised about the rise in the number of overdue Care Act assessments and their impact on the budget and what action was being taken with them; and that whilst not directly related to performance, concerns were raised over care home closures and shortages of care staff.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive:

Endorsed the Q3 2023/2024 Performance Management Report (appendix A) for Somerset Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

**12 Revisions to the Terms of Reference of the Property & Investment Executive
1 Sub-Committee - Agenda Item 9**

The Lead Member for Economic Development, Planning and Assets, Cllr Ros Wyke, introduced the report and handed over to the Monitoring Officer, David Clark, who explained that the proposals were an administrative change to the to the role and remit of the of the Sub-Committee. The major focus of the revised terms of reference were to allow the Sub-Committee to deal with the main significant areas of business and to allow officers, who already had delegated authority to deal had with the minor day to day operations of the portfolio.

In response to a question over attending the Sub-Committee's meetings online the Monitoring Officer explained that it was because of the sensitive commercial nature of the information discussed, and the difficulty of controlling access via Teams, that the meetings, which complied with all the current legal requirements, were held in person.

The Leader of Council pointed out that some wording had been missed off the proposed recommendation which should after 'Appendix A' read 'Revisions to Property and Investments Executive Sub-Committee - Revised terms of reference'.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive

Agreed the revised Terms of Reference for the Property and Investments Executive Sub-Committee as set out in Appendix A (Revisions to Property and Investments Executive Sub-Committee - Revised terms of reference).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

12 Review of Street Cleansing and Groundcare Operations - Agenda Item 10

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The Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture, Cllr Federica Smith - Roberts, introduced the report which concerned proposals for the devolution and in-sourcing, when the current contracts expired, of outsourced ground maintenance and street scene services in the former Mendip, Taunton Deane and West Somerset districts.

It was clarified that: the report related to three different contracts - the former Mendip District Council area which expired in Jun 2025; the former West Somerset District Council area which expired on 30 November 2024, but would likely trigger an automatic 3 year extension clause so it would end in November 2027 and the Taunton Deane Borough Council area which expired on 31 January 2025, but would likely trigger an automatic 3 year extension clause so it would end in January 2028; that ground care was maintenance of parks and open spaces, tree management and play areas; that street cleansing was street sweeping, litter picking, emptying of bins on council land, toilet cleaning and collection of fly tips; how the in-sourcing of all the services at the expiration of the contracts would yield a saving; that a higher saving would likely be achieved by devolving the services to city, town and parish councils and the 5 main towns in the area had all expressed an interest; that the intention was to in-source any of the services that were not devolved and it was likely that street sweeping would be one of the services that would be kept in house; and in summary it was highlighted that members would be advised whether the 3 year extensions for the two Somerset West & Taunton contracts were triggered.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive agreed:

- a. **To explore and agree devolution of services to town and parish councils at the point of expiration of contracts.**
- b. **To in source all remaining services under the contract that aren't devolved to town and parish councils at the point of contract expiration.**
- c. **The case for applying exemption information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore treat the attached confidential Appendix, as they contain commercially sensitive information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

12 Appointment of Contractor for the development of Phase B & Ci of the NTWP -
3 Agenda Item 11

The Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Culture, Cllr Frederica Smith-Roberts presented the report. The Lead Member explained that the North Taunton Woolaway Project would be providing over 230 high quality, energy efficient homes and this report set out the case for the awarding of a contract for Phases B and Ci.

She also announced the good news that Phase A of the North Taunton Woolaway Project had been shortlisted for the South West Residential Property Awards in relation to affordable housing.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive agreed:

To approve the outcome of the procurement process to award a contract to the lead bidder named in the Tender Evaluation Report Confidential Appendix B.

To agree the case for applying exemption information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore treat the attached confidential Appendices B and C in confidence, as they contain commercially sensitive

information, and as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

12 **Executive Decisions in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority**
4 **and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership - Agenda**
Item 12

The Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Dixie Darch, introduced the report and highlighted that Somerset Council needed, on an annual basis, to agree to be the Host Authority and the Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), and that they were also making some minor changes to the Local Memorandum of Understanding.

She then handed over to the SRAs David Mitchell, who explained that whilst the report was mainly about process and good governance, it was also about enabling, through the money the SRA could raise, extra work, with their partners across the county to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding.

During discussion the following points were made: the Winter had been very severe with localised flooding, including ground flooding, affecting more households than the 2013-2014 floods but in a more sporadic way, across different communities, many of which had not been flooded before; that a draft strategy had been circulated that recognized the issue of the changing impacts of climate change and that there was likely to be more of these types of events and the need to take a more holistic, catchment based approach across the county; that the SRA was setting up a process to award grants for community groups and city, town and parish councils which would hopefully be in place around August or September this year; how the SRA funded two Community Engagement Officers who were more than happy to talk to groups and councils about flooding; and that Somerset Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, had a duty to undertake investigations after flood events and they had so far managed to resource this using staff secondment.

Following consideration of the officer report and discussion, the Executive agreed:

- a. To Somerset Council continuing in the role of Host Authority and**

Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority.

- b. To review the revised 2024-25 Local Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution set out in Appendix 1 and authorise the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change to sign this on behalf of Somerset Council.**
- c. To review the proposed SRA Budget and SRA Enhanced Programme for 2024-25, (Appendix 2 SRA Board 2024-25 Enhanced Programme and Budget) in accordance with the recommendations to be considered by the SRA Board at its meeting on 8 March 2024.**
- d. To the release of funding committed from all sources in 2024-25 for the purposes of the SRA, subject to receipt of those funds, in accordance with the budget for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 2 SRA Board Paper 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget.**
- e. That Somerset Councillors that sit on the SRA Board can approve the publication of the SRA's new Strategy and Flood Action Plan at the SRA Board meeting on 8 March 2024.**
- f. That the detailed management of the 2024-25 SRA Budget and Enhanced Programme within the control total allocated to the SRA is undertaken in accordance with the constitutional, financial regulations and decision-making arrangements of Somerset Council as Accountable Body.**
- g. The case (set out in 'legal implications' for exempt information) for Appendix 3 CONFIDENTIAL 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions WITH COSTS to be treated in confidence, as the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the attached report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the attached report

(The meeting ended at 1.03 pm)

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CHAIR