

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held at 10am on

Wednesday 15 March 2023

PRESENT

Cllr Bill Revans (in the Chair)

Cllr Adam Dance

Cllr Val Keitch

Cllr Liz Leyshon

Cllr Mike Rigby

Cllr Heather Shearer

Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts

Cllr Ros Wyke

Associate Lead Members: Cllr Mike Stanton, Cllr Sarah Wakefield, Cllr David Woan

Apologies: Cllr Sarah Dyke (in virtual attendance), Cllr Tessa Munt (in virtual attendance), Cllr Peter Seib

Other Members in attendance: Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Cllr David Fothergill, Cllr Faye Purbrick, Cllr Lucy Trimmell

Other Members in virtual attendance: Cllr Tom Deakin, Cllr Andy Dingwall, Cllr Sarah Dyke, Cllr John Hunt, Cllr Andy Kendall, Cllr Martin Lovell, Cllr Tessa Munt, Cllr Fran Smith, Cllr Rosemary Woods

106 Declarations of Interest – Agenda Item 2

Members of the Executive declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a District, City/Town, or Parish Council:
Cllr A Dance – South Somerset District Council, South Petherton Parish Council

Cllr S Dyke – South Somerset District Council

Cllr V Keitch – South Somerset District Council, Ilminster Town Council

Cllr L Leyshon – Mendip District Council

Cllr B Revans – Sedgemoor District Council

Cllr M Rigby – Somerset West & Taunton Council, Bishop's Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council

Cllr H Shearer – Mendip District Council, Street Parish Council

Cllr F Smith-Roberts – Somerset West & Taunton Council
Cllr R Wyke – Mendip District Council, Vice Chair Westbury-sub-Mendip
Parish Council

107 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023 – Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 27 February 2023 were agreed upon, with a minor change to 082 to replace Chief Executive Sedgemoor District Council, with Deputy Chief Executive Sedgemoor District Council, and signed by the Chair.

108 Public Question Time (PQT) – Agenda Item 4

The Chair noted that there were no public questions or statements submitted by the submission deadline.

109 Quarter 3 Performance Report- Agenda Item 5

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, introduced the report, and invited the Corporate Planning & Performance Manager, Nicola Miles, to present the report.

The Corporate Planning & Performance Manager proceeded to present the report, highlighting: that the report consisted of 24 performance indicators from across the organisation and provided the latest information available in the period up until 31 December 2022; the areas of concern in this period included Connecting Devon and Somerset Phase 2 (part 2), the Revenue Budget – Projected Outturn Position for 2022/23; and areas of Success in this period including Children’s Data – Education, Health & Care, Children’s Data – Children Looked After, Number of Care Packages on the Unmet Needs List, Returned Packages of Care (Homecare ‘Hand backs’).

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present; questions and points raised included: appreciation for the work and contribution of colleagues across the five Councils; and the improvements in Adult’s and Children’s Social Care.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive considered and commented on the information contained within the report, and agreed the report and appendices as the latest position for Somerset County Council against its Council Vision.

110 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report – Month 10 - Agenda Item 6

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Finance and Human Resources, Cllr Liz Leyshon, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Finance and Human Resources introduced the report, highlighting: the overall projection for an overspend of £23.1m, an improvement from the previous month of £1.2m; the work on the outturn report across the five Councils; the contingency budget work, including capital receipts flexibility and business rate pooling; slippage including LGR costs and the capital programme; the damage to highway networks due to adverse winter weather and the potential of Government funding for additional highways funding for the financial year 2023/24.

The Director of Finance, Jason Vaughan, added that the statutory deadline for outturn submission is the end of May, but with the potential for an extension.

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care, Cllr Heather Shearer, commented that the Adult's Health overspend had stabilised, noting that: the level of unmet need had decreased; there has been a decrease in the number of care packages 'handed back'; and the continued lobbying for funding and support from health colleagues.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included: the national financial picture and Local Authority comparisons, including the impact of high inflation and the higher than budgeted for pay award; the recognition of the work on domestic and business rates to provide a good base for the new Council; the reserve position for the 2023/24 financial year; and the budget underspend projections across the four District Councils.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive noted the forecast overspend for 2022/23 of £23.1m.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

111 Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) 2022/23 and 2023/24– Agenda item 7

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Communities, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Communities introduced the report, highlighting: the Government and Homes for Ukraine funding received to support Local Authorities to obtain and refurbish properties to provide sustainable housing; the work and challenges to meet Government targets; the positive actions to help those who have come to the UK through different resettlement schemes be able to have houses within the area; and the amendment to the report to section 2.3, replacing £3.67m with £3.49m with no change to the overall funding.

At the invitation of the Lead Member, The Assistant Director Development and Regeneration, SWT, Chris Brown, proceeded to present the report, drawing members attention to: the two themes, people and property; the distribution of funds in two tranches, with the first expected at the end of March; and the LA Memorandum of Understanding to agree delivery plans.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other members present, questions and points raised included: LA match funding and use of the funds for client groups; the provision of temporary accommodation; and future Scrutiny committee reporting arrangements.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Agreed to the Councils entering a Memorandum of Understanding with DLUHC that commits Somerset Council to deliver the terms of the scheme**
- 2. Confirmed the S24 specific consent for Mendip, Sedgemoor, and Somerset West and Taunton District Councils to enter an MOU with DLUHC committing Somerset Council to this capital investment in 2023/24**
- 3. Endorsed a delegated decision by the Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services (S151 Officer) to add £7.5m to the Capital Programme in 2023/24 to be funded by £3.49m of LAHF capital grant and the match-funding balance from existing Homes for Ukraine tariff revenue grant funds held**
- 4. Delegated authority to the Executive Director – Resources and Corporate Services (S151 Officer) to determine actual funding of final outturn costs for the scheme, and the allocation of budget, costs and income between General Fund services budget and the Housing Revenue Account in accordance with proper accounting practices**
- 5. Delegated the approval of acquisitions and associated works to the Executive Director for Communities where properties are funded by LAHF**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

112 Building and Resident Health & Safety Strategy – Agenda Item 8

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Communities, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Communities introduced the report, highlighting: the new regulations enacted by Parliament that will be phased into law; and that the Strategy will continue to evolve after vesting day.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Housing & Communities, SWT, James Barra, and the Chief Executive, Homes in Sedgemoor (HiS), Peter Hatch, advised that the Strategy sets a strong foundation for the new Somerset Council, proving assurance that new areas of regulation are being met.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other members present, there were no questions or comments from Members.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Approved the adoption of the Building and Resident Health & Safety Strategy and its associated Action Plan**
- 2. Recognised and accepted the Corporate Accountability as set out within Section 5 of the Strategy to ensure the safety of our Buildings and Residents and develop the appropriate reporting and monitoring structure to ensure full compliance**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

113 Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy – Agenda item 9

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Communities, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Communities introduced the report, highlighting: that the policy details the financial assistance that the Council can offer owner-occupiers, tenants and landlords for adaptations to their homes; and the varied forms of assistance available.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other members present; questions and points raised included: the benefit of DFG (Disabled Facilities Grant) top-up grants.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

1. Approved the adoption of the Somerset Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy

2. Delegated authority to the Service Director for Housing Services in consultation with the relevant Executive Member responsible for the service to make future minor and operational and legislative changes to the policy

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

114 Somerset Council - Proposed Executive Sub-Committees – Agenda Item 10

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, introduced the report and invited the Monitoring Officer and Head of Governance & Democratic Services, Scott Wooldridge, to present the report.

The Monitoring Officer and Head of Governance and Democratic Services proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the detailed terms of reference; the on-going work both ahead of and beyond the formal creation of the new Somerset Council; and the importance of flexibility to allow the Executive to undertake all functions for the new Council.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other Members present; question and points raised included: sub-committee structure development and responsibilities; and the key role of existing relationships

to ensure continuity through the harbour management advisory committee.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Agreed the establishment of the Harbour Management Advisory Committee (Executive Sub-Committee) from 1 April 2023 as set out in Appendix 1;**
- 2. Delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to determine the membership of any executive sub-committees; and**
- 3. Noted that further work is being undertaken on potential additional Executive Sub-Committees and any recommendations will be made to the Executive in due course**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

115 Taunton Town Council Asset Transfer – Agenda Item 11

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Deputy Chief Executive & Director Place and Climate Change, Somerset West and Taunton Council, Chris Hall, to present the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive & Director Place and Climate Change, Somerset West and Taunton Council proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the collaborative work to finalise the list of assets to be transferred; and that the report classified the list of assets and transfers from Somerset Council to Taunton Town Council from 1 April 2023.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other Members present, points raised included: the equity and fairness of asset valuation and service delivery across all City, Town and Parish Councils; the transfer of

assets in reasonable and operational order; and the affordability of a replacement footbridge in Goodlands Gardens, Taunton.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. The List set out at 11.3.1 through to 11.3.3 of the report, for transfer to Taunton Town Council as soon as practical from 1 April 2023**
- 2. To delegate authority to the Head of Property, to conclude terms and execute the transfers**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report

116 LGR: Business Continuity Management for Somerset Council –
Agenda Item 12

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity, Cllr Val Keitch, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity introduced the report, highlighting: that to enable the new Somerset Council to meet its statutory duties a new business continuity strategy and corporate-level business continuity plan had been developed; and that the plan builds on the five existing Councils robust business continuity frameworks. The Lead Member invited the Service Manager, Civil Contingencies, Nicola Dawson, to present the report.

The Service Manager, Civil Contingencies proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the alignment of practices; work to consolidate and produce a new corporate level plan; and the assessment of the new plans by South West Audit Partnership.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other Members present; there were no comments or points raised.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive noted the report as assurance that the business continuity management arrangements are in place for Vesting Day and beyond.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

117 LGR: Incident Management System For Somerset Council – Agenda Item 13

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity, Cllr Val Keitch, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Local Government Reorganisation and Prosperity introduced the report, highlighting the Somerset Council's statutory duty to maintain readiness to respond to emergencies. The Lead Member invited the Service Manager, Civil Contingencies, Nicola Dawson, to present the report.

The Service Manager, Civil Contingencies proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the alignment of the five Councils response plans; and the supporting capabilities including contact lists and duty officer rotas.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present; there were no comments or points raised.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

Following consideration of the officer report, appendices and discussion, the Executive noted the report as assurance that the emergency plans and response arrangements are in place for Vesting Day and beyond. This is a tranche one deliverable for LGR

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

118 Award of Professional Services Contract for Place Services – Agenda Item 14

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Transport and Digital, Cllr Mike Rigby, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Transport and Digital introduced the report highlighting: the challenging recruitment market; and that the opportunity to rely on contracts may be reduced going forwards as contractor capabilities are similarly reduced due to recruitment challenges.

At the Lead Members invitation, the Strategic Manager Highways and Transport, Mike O'Dowd-Jones, and the Strategic Manager Commercial and Procurement, Paul Skuse, presented the report highlighting: the standard compliant procurement process; the award of a professional services contract for the Council, which provides top-up resources focused on highways and transport services, but also provides resources for wider place-based and regeneration services; and that the purpose of the contract is to allow flexibility in the workforce.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other members present, questions and points raised included: the geographically wider job market and broader recruitment review; and employment opportunities in Local Government.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Approved the award of a four-year contract to the three suppliers identified in the attached Confidential Appendix B for the supply of computer software and associated services from 1 May 2023**

- 2. Agreed that Appendix B 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 officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

119 Award of a framework agreement for Software Reseller services to the three preferred applicants – Agenda Item 15

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Head of ICT, Andy Kennell, to present the report.

The Head of ICT proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the proposal to award a software services framework contract to three suppliers; that the award would support the future Somerset Council to deliver best value across a wide range of software products; and the opportunity to access to new innovative and local suppliers across the framework.

The Leader of the Council invited comments from other members present, questions and points raised included: the support of local Somerset businesses to encourage growth.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Approved the award of a four-year contract to the three suppliers identified in the attached Confidential Appendix B for the supply of computer software and associated services from 1 May 2023**
- 2. Agreed that Appendix B 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 officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

120 Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) 2023-24 Enhanced Programme of Flood Risk Management Works and signing the SRA Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution – Agenda Item 16

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Sarah Dyke, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change introduced the report, highlighting: that the SRA is unique to Somerset; the purpose of the SRA is to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset; that though the SRA an additional £22.8m has been raised to increase resilience to flooding across the County; and that the SRA has completed 240 projects in the past eight years. The Lead Member invited the Service Manager, SRA, David Mitchell, to present the report.

The Service Manager, SRA, proceeded to present the report highlighting: that SRA funds are raised through Council Tax precept, with no reduction to funding for other services; that the precept equates to £3.01m; and that paragraph 1.3 of the report should be amended to read 2023 – 24.

The Leader of Council invited comments from other Members present; questions and points raised included; the SRA precept and associated restrictions; and that Somerset is the only Local Authority funding flooding resilience in this way.

The Executive proceeded to vote on the recommendations, which were agreed unanimously.

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

- 1. Agreed to Somerset Council taking on the roles of Host Authority and Accountable Body for the Somerset Rivers Authority**

- 2. Approved the revised Local Memorandum of Understanding (including the Constitution of the SRA) set out in Appendix 1 of the report, and authorised the Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change to sign this on behalf of Somerset Council**
- 3. Agreed the case (set out in 'legal implications' for exempt information) for Appendix 3 CONFIDENTIAL 2023-24 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**
- 4. Approved the SRA Budget and SRA Enhanced Programme for 2023/24, (Appendix 2 ITEM 9 2023-24 Enhanced Programme and Budget) in accordance with the recommendations of the SRA Board from its meeting on the 3rd of March 2023**
- 5. Agreed to the release of funding committed from all sources in 2023/24 for the purposes of the SRA, subject to receipt of those funds, in accordance with the budget for 2023/23 as set out in item 4 above**
- 6. Agreed that the detailed management of the 2023/24 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**

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED: As set out in the officer report.

REASON FOR DECISION: As set out in the officer report.

123 Any Other Business – Agenda Item 17

There were no items of other business.

(The meeting ended at 12:47 pm)

CHAIR