

Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall,
Taunton TA1 4DY, on Wednesday, 10 May 2023 at 10.00 am

Present:

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

Cllr Adam Dance	Cllr Sarah Dyke
Cllr Tessa Munt	Cllr Mike Rigby
Cllr Heather Shearer	Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts
Cllr Ros Wyke	

Other Members in Attendance

Cllr Steve Ashton, Cllr Tom Deakin, Cllr Habib Farbahi, Cllr Dean Ruddle, Cllr Fran Smith, Cllr Lucy Trimmell, Cllr Sarah Wakefield

Other Members in Virtual Attendance

Cllr Adam Boyden, Cllr Mandy Chilcott, Cllr David Fothergill, Cllr Andy Hadley, Cllr Marcus Kravis, Cllr Tony Lock, Cllr Diogo Rodrigues, Cllr Jo Roundell Greene, Cllr Gill Slocombe, Cllr Mike Stanton, Cllr David Woan.

1 Apologies for Absence – Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Cllr Val Keitch (in virtual attendance)

Flooding in the County

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, referred to the overnight significant flooding incident in areas of Somerset, thanking all involved in reacting, finding solutions and supporting residents impacted by the situation.

At the invitation of the Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, the Executive Director, Climate and Place, Mickey Green, provided an update on the conditions, resulting from flash flooding in South Somerset, highlighting; the coordinated response and multi-agency meetings held and further plans to support and act should the situation worsen; the areas of concern and work of Somerset Council officers alongside the emergency services and volunteers to support and assist those

impacted and assist in the continued recovery operation.

The Lead Member for Environment and Climate Change, Cllr Sarah Dyke, and the Lead Member for Transport and Digital, Cllr Mike Rigby, further added to the above points advising of the significant road debris and landslides, the investigation and potential intervention to understand the situation and work towards future prevention.

The Service Director Public Health, Lou Woolway, added to the above points advising of work taking place from a Public Health perspective, using learning from previous flooding incidents with the focus on the potential sewage leaks and use of generators indoors.

2 Minutes from the Previous Meeting – Agenda Item 2

The minutes of the Executive meeting held on 15 March 2023 were agreed upon, and signed by the Chair.

3 Declarations of Interest – Agenda Item 3

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting. (The personal interests of Councillors of Somerset Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

Members of the Executive declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a City/Town, or Parish Council:

Cllr A Dance – South Petherton Parish Council

Cllr V Keitch – Ilminster Town Council

Cllr M Rigby – Bishop’s Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council

Cllr H Shearer – Street Parish Council

Cllr F Smith-Roberts – Taunton Town Council

Cllr R Wyke – Vice Chair Westbury-sub-Mendip Parish Council

4 Public Question Time – Agenda Item 4

The Chair noted that there had been no public questions submitted by the published submission deadline.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, paid tribute to Somerset Councillor, Cllr Mike Lewis, who sadly passed away 2 May 2023.

5 Equality Audit, Assessment and Peer Challenge – Agenda Item 5

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited the Lead Member for Public Health and Equalities, Cllr Adam Dance, to introduce the report.

The Lead Member for Public Health and Equalities, Cllr Adam Dance, introduced the report, highlighting: that the paper proposed the completion of three external audit processes to help identify where the Council is working well, areas of improvement and assist with identified actions needed to make the improvements; that with the transition to a single authority in Somerset there was the opportunity to review, reassess and establish a direction and fresh benchmark going forward for Somerset Council.

At the invitation of the Lead Member the Public Health Promotion Manager-Equalities, Tom Rutland, proceeded to present the report, highlighting: the three proposed external audits and the work processes to bring the assessments together to contribute to the Council's ongoing commitment and improvement around equality and diversity; the three audits: Disability Confident Leader Assessment, Internal Race Audit, Equality Framework for Local Government Peer Assessment; and the provision of a robust action plan to support progress.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included: the welcome work during the early formation of Somerset Council; the learning from the five previous Council's; the organisational wide training, including Elected Members and staff; the importance of understanding equality and diversity across the organisation; the role of a 'champion' for effective guidance and challenge; the duty under the equality legislation and the opportunity to look to assess function as an organisation; public and community engagement; the capacity and resource of the team to achieve recommendations; and the work with partners to build into service provision.

The Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources and Performance, Cllr Liz Leyshon, emphasised the importance of the Member Equality Steering Group (MESG) and asked for assurance of the involvement of the MESG in the planned work through April 2024.

In response, the Public Health Promotion Manager-Equalities, Tom Rutland, advised of the support and involvement of the MESG thus far and confirmed that the

future involvement of MESH to be integral to the audit processes and the promotion of the organisational direction.

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

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

- **Approved the Council undertaking a Disability Confident Leader assessment in June. This will include the preparation work, audit process and receiving the recommendations and findings that come from this audit.**
- **Approved the Council undertaking an internal Race Audit in August. This will include the preparation work, audit process and receiving the recommendations and findings that come from this audit.**
- **Approved the commitment to deliver training on race and challenging behaviour.**
- **Approved the Council undertaking an Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) Peer Assessment in October. This will include the preparation work, 3-day external Peer Assessment, receiving the recommendations and findings that come from this assessment and agreed to receive a response to this report.**
- **Acknowledged the level of commitment that will be needed from the whole organisation, and partners, over the coming year to support these three processes.**

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

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

6 Street Naming & Numbering Policy adoption – Agenda Item 6

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, Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, introduced the report, highlighting: that Somerset Council is now the statutory body responsible for the establishment and operation of the street naming and numbering service to

ensure that all properties in the area are officially addressed, formerly the remit of district councils operating in a two-tier local government system; and the options considered.

The Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities, Alyn Jones, further added to the above points, highlighting; the background to the street naming and legislation process, framework and policy.

The Leader of the Council, Cllr Bill Revans, invited comments from other Members present, questions and points raised included; the legislation and governance route of policy adoption; street naming consultation with local communities and Parish Councils.

The Lead Member for Prosperity, Assets and Development, Cllr Ros Wyke, asked that a formal protocol be considered for the process of consulting with Parish Councils regarding street naming.

In response, the Digital Systems and IT Manager, Adam Rhymer, confirmed that currently full consultation is given as a matter of courtesy to Parish Councils, and that the delivery of the service and policy forming is set to go through the relevant workstream to form a policy of working arrangement and engagement with Parish 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 and approved:

- **The intention of the Council to adopt the legislation identified as Option A, and the proposed policy, to enable and support the operation of the Street Naming and Numbering Service.**
- **The delegation of authority to the Executive Director Strategy, Workforce & Localities to place the relevant notices in accordance with paragraph 25 of Schedule 14 Local Government Act 1972 confirming the intention set out at paragraph 9(a) of the report; and**
- **Further to the notices under 9(b) being issued and the relevant time periods elapsing, that authority be delegated to Executive Director Strategy, Workforce & Localities to arrange to submit the proposal to adopt the Option A legislation, and the draft policy, to Full Council for adoption at the next available date.**

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

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

7 Executive Forward Plan – Agenda Item 7 - Agenda Item 7

The Executive noted the Forward Plan

(The meeting ended)

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CHAIR