

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of Annual Council held on 11 May 2016 at 2.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Williton

Present:

Councillor G S Dowding Chairman
Councillor B Heywood Vice-Chairman

Councillor D Archer	Councillor A Behan
Councillor M J Chilcott	Councillor R Clifford
Councillor M O A Dewdney	Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor A P Hadley	Councillor T Hall
Councillor I Jones	Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor B Maitland-Walker	Councillor K M Mills
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor J Parbrook	Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor R Thomas	Councillor N Thwaites
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	Councillor K H Turner
Councillor D J Westcott	Councillor R Woods

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (P James)
Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director Energy Infrastructure (A Goodchild)
CIM Fund Manager (L Redston)
Planning Policy Manager (N Bryant)
Planning Policy Officer (M Wilsher)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

The meeting was opened with prayers led by the Reverend David Weir.

Councillor G S Dowding provided a warm welcome to Honorary Alderman Mrs Eileen Woods who was in attendance.

Councillor Dowding went on to state that he had really appreciated his role as Chairman of West Somerset Council and deemed his time an honour to chair such an interesting and diverse council, with the Hinkley Point project headlining much of his time. West Somerset Council was in a difficult financial situation at present but Councillor Dowding believed the new Chairman would be very discerning and attentive. He concluded by thanking all the officers who had assisted him, especially the Assistant Chief Executive, and thanked Members for their support, in particular he was most grateful to both the Leader of Council and the Leader of the Opposition for their serious and considerate attitude.

C1 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor B Heywood be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Heywood thanked Councillors for electing him as Chairman, for having faith and confidence in him and vowed that he, together with the Members and officers, would do the very best for the people of West Somerset in these uncertain times. He expressed it was a great honour and privilege for him to be elected and praised the Chairmen who had gone before him. He thanked the Reverend for his wise and kindly words, and finished by thanking Councillor Dowding for his guidance and presented him with a past Chairman's badge.

C2 Appointment of Vice Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor R Woods be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C3 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I Aldridge, B Leaker and T Venner.

C4 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No.	Member of	Action Taken
Cllr D Archer	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr S Goss	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr B Maitland-Walker	All	Carhampton	Spoke and voted
Cllr C Morgan	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr R Thomas	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew	All	Crowcombe	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

In addition, Councillor K Turner declared a prejudicial interest as a private landlord housing vulnerable tenants in respect of Item 15 HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of Housing Contribution and left the Chamber during this item.

C5 Minutes

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20 April 2016, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20 April 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

C6 Public Participation

No members of the public spoke at the meeting on any items on the agenda.

C7 Appointment of Leader

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew as Leader be confirmed for the second year of a four year term.

C8 Appointment of Deputy Leader

RESOLVED that Councillor M J Chilcott be appointed as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

C9 Cabinet

The Leader announced the following appointments and portfolios:

Name	Political Group	Lead Member
Councillor A Trollope-Bellew	Conservative	Leader and Performance and Corporate Support
Councillor M Chilcott	Conservative	Resources and Central Support
Councillor M Dewdney	Conservative	Environment
Councillor K M Mills	Conservative	Regeneration and Economic Growth
Councillor C Morgan	Conservative	Energy Infrastructure
Councillor S J Pugsley	Conservative	Executive Support and Democracy
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative	Housing, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor D J Westcott	Conservative	Community and Customer

RESOLVED that the appointments be noted and that the Corporate Plan, Constitution and any other relevant documents be updated accordingly.

C10 Allocation of Seats to Committees

RESOLVED that the nominations for Committee seats made by the political groups be ratified and that the composition of the Committees be as detailed below.

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
9 seats in total	
Conservative 7	
West Somerset Opposition 2	
Name	Political Group
Councillor R Clifford	Conservative
Councillor G S Dowding	Conservative
Councillor B Leaker	Conservative
Councillor B Maitland-Walker	Conservative
Councillor J Parbrook	Conservative

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Councillor N Thwaites	Conservative
Councillor R Woods	Conservative
Councillor I Aldridge	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor P H Murphy	West Somerset Opposition

LICENSING COMMITTEE	
11 seats in total	
Conservative 8	
West Somerset Opposition 3	
Name	Political Group
Councillor S Y Goss	Conservative
Councillor B Leaker	Conservative
Councillor R P Lillis	Conservative
Councillor J Parbrook	Conservative
Councillor R Thomas	Conservative
Councillor N Thwaites	Conservative
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative
Councillor D J Westcott	Conservative
Councillor I Aldridge	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor H J W Davies	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor I Jones	West Somerset Opposition

PLANNING COMMITTEE	
15 seats in total	
Conservative 11	
West Somerset Opposition 4	
Name	Political Group
Councillor D Archer	Conservative
Councillor G S Dowding	Conservative
Councillor S Y Goss	Conservative
Councillor A P Hadley	Conservative
Councillor B Heywood	Conservative
Councillor B Maitland-Walker	Conservative
Councillor C Morgan	Conservative
Councillor J Parbrook	Conservative
Councillor S J Pugsley	Conservative
Councillor K H Turner	Conservative
Councillor R Woods	Conservative
Councillor I Aldridge	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor I Jones	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor P H Murphy	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor T Venner	West Somerset Opposition

AUDIT COMMITTEE	
7 seats in total	
Conservative 5	
West Somerset Opposition 2	
Name	Political Group
Councillor D Archer	Conservative

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Councillor R P Lillis	Conservative
Councillor R Thomas	Conservative
Councillor N Thwaites	Conservative
Councillor R Woods	Conservative
Councillor A Behan	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor T Venner	West Somerset Opposition

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PANEL	
8 seats in total Conservative 6 West Somerset Opposition 2	
Name	Political Group
Councillor D Archer	Conservative
Councillor S Y Goss	Conservative
Councillor B Heywood	Conservative
Councillor B Maitland-Walker	Conservative
Councillor J Parbrook	Conservative
Councillor K Turner	Conservative
Councillor I Aldridge	West Somerset Opposition
Councillor T Venner	West Somerset Opposition

STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
9 seats in total 3 West Somerset District Councillors 3 Independent Members 3 Parish/Town Councillors
Councillor P H Murphy Councillor N Thwaites Councillor D J Westcott

C11 Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees

The following appointments were made:

Scrutiny Committee

Chairman	Councillor P H Murphy
Vice Chairman	Councillor N Thwaites

Planning Committee

Chairman	Councillor S J Pugsley
Vice Chairman	Councillor B Maitland-Walker

Licensing Committee

Chairman	Councillor R P Lillis
Vice Chairman	Councillor D J Westcott

Audit Committee

Chairman	Councillor R P Lillis
Vice Chairman	Councillor T Venner

Local Development Panel

Chairman

Councillor K H Turner

Vice Chairman

Councillor S Y Goss

C12

Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies

RESOLVED that the Members appointed to serve on Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2016-2017 be as follows:

ORGANISATION	REPS 2014/2015
Management Committee of Broadlands	Councillor J Parbrook
MATA Regal Theatre Co Ltd	Councillor B Leaker
Somerset Rural Youth Project	Councillor A P Hadley
Early Years Partnership Meeting	Councillor T Venner
Monitoring and Evaluation Group West Somerset Sports & Leisure Centre	Councillor T Hall
Somerset County Playing Fields Association	Councillor H J W Davies
Somerset Play Forum	Councillor I Aldridge
Somerset Passenger Transport Forum	Councillor M O A Dewdney
Exmoor National Park (politically balanced)	Councillor S J Pugsley Councillor B Heywood Councillor M O A Dewdney Councillor I Jones
Somerset Building Preservation Trust	Councillor H J W Davies Deputy: Councillor G Dowding
The Parrett Drainage Board	Councillor B Maitland-Walker (Dunster Area) Councillor C Morgan (Stockland Area)
Wessex Water Customer Liaison Panels	Councillor M O A Dewdney
West Somerset Railway Partnership Development Group	Councillor K M Mills Deputy: Councillor B Leaker and Councillor R Lillis
WSC Member Champion	Councillor P H Murphy
South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) Members Meeting	Chair of Audit Committee – Councillor R P Lillis
Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee	Councillor A Trollope-Bellew Councillor S Dowding
West Somerset Advice Bureau	Councillor J Parbrook Deputy: Councillor R Clifford
ENGAGE - West Somerset Voluntary Sector Development agency	Councillor R Lillis Deputy: Councillor N Thwaites

Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group	Councillor M O A Dewdney Councillor C Morgan Councillor S Goss
Minehead EYE Management Committee	Councillor D J Westcott
Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership	Councillor S Dowding
Somerset Local Access Forum	Councillor M O A Dewdney
Minehead Coastal Community Team	Councillor R Thomas Councillor A Hadley Councillor K Mills (PH) Deputy: Councillor J Parbrook
Police and Crime Panel	Councillor S Dowding Deputy: Councillor B Leaker
Health and Wellbeing Board	Councillor K Turner
Joint Partnership Advisory Group	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew Councillor M J Chilcott Councillor A P Hadley Councillor R P Lillis Councillor P H Murphy
Asset Project Group	Councillor K Turner Councillor A P Hadley Councillor G S Dowding Councillor P Murphy

C13 Appointment of Representatives on the Planning Obligations Board for Hinkley Point

RESOLVED that Councillors M J Chilcott and C Morgan (as reserve) be appointed to serve on the Planning Obligations Board for Hinkley Point for the municipal year 2016-2017.

C14 Proposed Amendments to the Joint Independent Members' Remuneration Panel

RESOLVED that John Campbell Thomson of 6 Barton Hey, Bishops Lydeard, Taunton, TA4 3NL and Mark Okuniewski of 8 Theaks Mews, South Street, Taunton, TA1 3EY be appointed to the Joint Independent Members' Remuneration Panel for an initial period of 3 years.

C15 Honorary Alderman

RESOLVED that Mr A Knight, Mr E May, Mr K Ross and Mr T Taylor be offered to have the title of Honorary Alderman bestowed upon them at a future meeting of Council.

C16 HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of CIM Funding

(Report No. WSC 62/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board for the allocation of monies from the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support outlined the details of the report, providing information on the Stogursey and District Victory Hall project and stating that this was one of the most impressive bids received by the Planning Obligations Board (POB). A huge amount of community work had been undertaken and the Lead Member believed this to be a fantastic model to follow; with the community of Stogursey being impacted the most by the Hinkley project.

The reasons for turning down the Somerset Village Agents application were given and the Lead Member reiterated POB's comments that there was a lack of clarity in connection with the impacts on communities in some areas.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Members were informed that the funding from EDF to the Parish Lengthsman scheme would cease at the end of September 2016 and this would represent a real loss as the Scheme provided a great benefit to Stogursey. The effect of the construction was very disruptive.
- Disappointment was expressed that the Village Agents application had not been supported.
- The Stogursey Village Hall application should serve as an exemplar to other communities who were seeking to enhance their facilities.
- Confirmation that the Economic Regeneration team had been working on the impacts and effects of the Hinkley build for quite a number of years and the information was readily available.
- Concern that there were not enough projects coming forward to access the CIM Fund.
- Officers were providing guidance and supporting the communities as much as they could with the resources available and once the final investment decision had been made a further campaign would be launched alerting people to the opportunities available and what support was available.
- Members were advised that the recommendations from the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group were being achieved.
- Tribute was paid to Councillors C Morgan and S Goss for their work on the Stogursey project in getting the community together.
- Communities would not fully realise the impacts until the start of the Hinkley project and the number of bids should increase once they were fully known.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Hinkley C Planning Obligations Board be endorsed as follows:

- (a) To note that Stogursey Parish Council has approved the allocation of £200,000 from the CIM Fund ring-fenced for Stogursey to Stogursey and District Village Hall Committee as a contribution towards the Victory Hall Project.
- (b) To release £400,000 from the CIM Fund ring-fenced for West Somerset to Stogursey and District Victory Hall Committee as a contribution towards the Victory Hall Project with the condition that no funding shall be released until:
 - The HPC Planning Obligations Board is presented with details of the governance and management arrangements for the project, including evidence of the skills and experience of the project team and the inclusion of skilled and experienced non-executive members within its structure, and is satisfied with those arrangements.
 - All other funding has been secured to cover the total costs of the project.
- (c) To refuse the application from the Community Council for Somerset for their Village Agents project on the basis that, at this time, the level of need for the project in relation to the HPC development in some areas cannot be established and that the applicant is encouraged to submit an application to the Community Impact Fund via the Somerset Community Foundation when this funding becomes available.

C17 **HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of Housing Contribution**

(Report No. WSC 63/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board for the allocation of monies from the Housing Contribution secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point C.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report on behalf of the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing and stated that one of the major challenges in the process had been looking at housing to increase bed spaces for local as well as external Hinkley workforce. She went on to provide details of what the funding would be used for and advised that the initiatives would help people, who did not have access to a bank account for example, to gain better access to housing accommodation more quickly and easily, in a more streamlined fashion.

She proposed the recommendation of the report which was duly seconded by Councillor J Parbrook.

During the discussion, clarification was provided on what areas the Credit Union covered and who would benefit.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligation Board be endorsed as follows:

- (a) To release £10,600 of the HPC Site Preparation Works Section 106 Housing Contribution to Bridgwater and District Credit Union for the upgrade of their systems and website.

C18 **Hinkley Point C Housing Fund – Update and Changes to Governance Arrangements**

(Report No. WSC 64/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide an update on the status of the Hinkley Point C Housing Fund which was paid to West Somerset Council in May 2014. It also sought approval for a change in the way in which the fund is governed.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report and provided detailed background information. He advised that Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) felt the housing fund process needed to be shortened and had asked WSC to split the housing enabling fund to enable them to fund their own schemes as it was clear that Sedgemoor had different priorities to that of West Somerset. It was reported that a legal agreement had been drawn up for both councils which ensured that all responsibility of how SDC spent their monies fell to them and therefore there was no risk to WSC.

Points raised during the discussion included:

- Members were supportive and the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing and the officers involved were thanked for their work in reaching an agreeable solution for both councils.
- It was a positive step for WSC as the Council could now guarantee that a portion of the fund was spent on projects in the district.
- A concern was raised that the funding as referred to in recommendation 2.3 of the report did not mention 'West Somerset'.
- A further concern was raised regarding recommendation 2.3 in that there did not appear to be any council scrutiny of the housing schemes - the mechanism should be robust and transparent and be consistent with the Council's financial regulations.
- Members were reassured that full Council had the power to amend and approve exceptions to the financial regulations in order to delegate additional responsibility as set out in recommendation 2.3.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report with a couple of additions to recommendation 2.3 to include the Leader of the Opposition in the list of Member delegations and to insert the words 'in West Somerset' following "...Housing Enabling Schemes...". The recommendations, as amended, were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

RESOLVED (1) that the update in relation to the delivery of bed spaces in accordance with approved initiatives be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the release of £1,759,272 to Sedgemoor District Council of the Hinkley Housing Fund be approved and authority be delegated to Sedgemoor District Council to spend this proportion of the contribution in accordance with the criteria set out in the Site Preparation Works Section 106 agreement provided that a legal agreement between the two District Councils is in place which ensures that all repayment risks for non-delivery of housing units using monies released to Sedgemoor District Council fall to Sedgemoor District Council prior to the release of funding.

RESOLVED (3) that authority be delegated to the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support, the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Lead Member for Energy Infrastructure and the Leader of the Opposition alongside the Assistant Directors for Resources, Property and Development and Energy Infrastructure to invest the remaining £730,392 of the Hinkley Housing Fund in Housing Enabling Schemes in West Somerset in accordance with the criteria set out in the Site Preparation Works Section 106 agreement.

C19 **Proposed Soundness Modifications to the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032**

(Report No. WSC 65/16, circulated with the Agenda. Appendix F and Appendix G circulated prior to the meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to put forward proposed soundness modifications to the West Somerset Local Plan to respond to substantive matters discussed at the hearing sessions.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report and thanked the planning policy officers for the immense amount of work undertaken and their involvement in getting the Local Plan to this stage, which had spanned a 9 year period. He explained the consequences for the Council of not having a sound Local Plan in place, e.g. the loss of the New Homes Bonus, and advised the Local Plan was now consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and had been adjusted as a result of the Examiner's comments during the hearing sessions. The Local Plan detailed alterations to the policy wording and these were clearly highlighted in the appendices to the report. The affordable housing policy had been subject to government change and as a consequence of a decision recently made, the policy would be reinstated to replace policy ref. SC4. Following public consultation and the Inspector's final assessment, it was envisaged that the Plan would be presented to full Council for adoption during August/September 2016.

He proposed the recommendations of the report, as amended, which were duly seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

RESOLVED (1) that the findings of the report and the proposed soundness modifications (including the further changes identified following the Inspector's letter of 5 May 2016 (attached at Appendix F and included in Appendix G to the report) for public consultation and forwarding to the Planning Inspector be endorsed.

RESOLVED (2) that the Planning Inspector be requested to identify any further 'main modifications' to be made to the Plan to enable it to be found 'sound' and capable of adoption.

C20 **Standards Advisory Committee**

(Minutes of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 14 March 2016 circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Standards Advisory Committee held on 14 March 2016 be adopted.

The meeting closed at 4.12 pm.