

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of Council held on 14 December 2016 at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Williton

Present:

Councillor R Woods (Vice Chairman) In the Chair
Councillor G S Dowding Vice-Chairman
(for the meeting)

Councillor I Aldridge
Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor S Goss
Councillor T Hall
Councillor B Maitland-Walker
Councillor C Morgan
Councillor J Parbrook
Councillor R Thomas
Councillor K H Turner
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor A Behan
Councillor M O Dewdney
Councillor A Hadley
Councillor R Lillis
Councillor K M Mills
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor T Venner

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director Operational Delivery (C Hall)
Assistant Director Corporate Services (P Carter)
Revenues and Benefits Service Manager (H Tiso)
Finance Manager (J Nacey)
Meeting Administrator (C Rendell)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

David Mansell, Development and Monitoring Manager, Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

C61 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor G S Dowding be appointed Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

C62 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Clifford, H J W Davies, B Heywood and I Jones.

C63 Minutes

(Minutes of the meetings of Special Council held on 7 September 2016 and Council on 23 November 2016, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED (1) that the Minutes of the meeting of Special Council held on 7 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

RESOLVED (2) that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

C64 **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 I Aldridge	All	Williton	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 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 T Venner	All	Minehead & SCC	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

In addition, Councillor A Trollope-Bellew declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Item 7 Fees and Charges 2017/18 as the owner of a private water supply and advised that if the matter were to be specifically discussed he would leave the Chamber during this item but would otherwise stay and participate fully in the item. Councillor A Hadley declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Item 7 Fees and Charges 2017/18 as a premises licence holder and advised that if the matter were to be specifically discussed he would leave the Chamber during this item but would otherwise stay and participate fully in the item.

C65 **Public Participation**

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

C66 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Vice-Chairman represented the Chairman of Council at the West Somerset College Christmas Concert on 13 December 2016.

C67 **Appointment of External Auditors 2018/19**

(Report No. WSC 149/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to introduce and explain the background to the letter received from Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) regarding the national scheme for appointing external auditors for 2018/19.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and provided background information, informing that the matter had been fully debated at the recent Audit Committee. She pointed out this was the first time local authorities have had to appoint their own external auditors and she drew Members' attention to the options for procurement as detailed in the report. It was clarified that the current external audit function was provided to the Council under contract by local government.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which was duly seconded by Councillor R Lillis.

In discussion of the report the following points were made:

- Members appreciated the exemplary work undertaken by the Council's current external auditor, Grant Thornton, and hoped the same standard of work would continue with the new appointment.
- Concern was expressed at the annual spend for the function.

RESOLVED that West Somerset Council opt in to the Public Sector Auditor Appointments (PSAA) scheme for procuring an external auditor for 2018/19 and beyond.

C68 **Fees and Charges 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 150/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to set out the proposed fees and charges for next financial year, effective from April 2017

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report, emphasising the key issues contained within, and advised that Scrutiny Committee had reviewed and supported the proposals. She drew Members' attention to the services which would be affected by a change to their fees and charges, the services where there would be no change, as well as the projected impact on budget estimates of the various proposals.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor K Turner.

Clarification was provided that there would be no change to car park fees and charges being presented at this stage due to no agreement being reached, and therefore was not included in the budget estimates. Any new charges, when appropriate, would be presented to full Council for agreement prior to implementation. A question was raised as to whether the Council had been in negotiations with Somerset County Council to ensure car park charges matched. In response to a further question regarding licensing fees, it was confirmed the Council operated a full cost recovery policy.

RESOLVED that the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18 as set out in Appendices A to I of the report be approved.

C69 **Review of Council Tax Rebate Scheme for 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 151/16, circulated prior to the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to seek agreement from Council to amend the Council Tax Rebate scheme for 2017/18 to ensure it provides for any exemptions for working age recipients who have a third or subsequent child born after 1 April 2017 that may apply in Housing Benefit Regulations.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and provided background information. She went on to propose the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor D Westcott.

RESOLVED that the Council Tax Rebate (CTR) scheme previously approved for 2017/18 be amended to that shown in Appendix 1 of the report. This will revise the scheme to ensure that in calculating CTR in 2017/18, we would apply any exemptions contained Housing Benefit legislation for working age recipients who have a third or subsequent child born after 1 April 2017.

C70 **Timetable of Meetings 2017/18**

(Amended Timetable of Meetings for 2017/18 Municipal Year tabled at the meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to agree a timetable of meetings for the 2017/2018 Municipal Year.

The Lead Member for Executive Support and Democracy presented the item and made reference to the changes made to the timetable since publication with the agenda and had been included in the version circulated to members at the meeting. He proposed the recommendation to approve the timetable for 2017/18 as amended, which was seconded by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew.

RESOLVED that the 2017/18 timetable be approved, as amended.

C71 **Commercially Confidential – Recycle More, Domestic Waste Collection Services**

(Report No. WSC 145/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to detail the business case proposals for services to the community and decrease future collection costs. The savings through the implementation of the scheme were identified and set out in the report.

With the agreement of the Chair, it was decided to present the waste partnership slides in public as there was no confidential information released in them.

David Mansell highlighted the changes to the recycling and refuse collections.

Key points of the presentation included:

- Proposed to collect more materials for recycling, especially the rigid plastics (which had been the most requested service improvement received by SWP), small electrical items and batteries; and refuse would be collected every three weeks.
- The only difference in the containment of the waste was the introduction of a blue bag for the storage of plastic and cans.
- In Somerset £12.3m was spent on landfill last year, the cost of which had gone up substantially since 2000. Half of the waste consisted of recyclable material and this was the biggest opportunity to achieve a saving.
- In 2014 a series of trials were undertaken to review collections with regard to investigating how more items could be recycled and the frequency of collections. Overall all of the trial arrangements were deemed to be better and worked well.
- The current recycling vehicles would be replaced with a newly designed fleet which would have a bigger, more robust compartment on the back to accommodate cardboard (which had increased significantly) to avoid the need for extra trips.
- Net saving when rolled out across five districts and the county would be approximately £1.7m per annum. The one-off roll out costs were approximately £2.2m to cover containers and delivery, communications, and Kier and SWP costs to ensure the roll out period ran efficiently.
- The collection of cartons was not proposed as part of the new service, but would be kept under review.
- A communications plan had been developed to inform the public of the roll out process and details of this was provided.
- There would be additional refuse capacity on request for the collection of nappies and adult hygiene products but it was felt that these collections would not be largely affected by the Recycle More scheme.
- The risks and opportunities associated with the changes were detailed.
- 14 councils across the country had adopted the three weekly refuse collection and there were other authorities looking to do the same.
- If approved, Recycle More would be rolled out in three phases in Autumn 2017 over a 12 month period.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- Food waste was collected weekly and pest infestation would not occur if recycled correctly.

- In response to a question raised as to how timely would the refuse collections be if travelling along the same route as the Hinkley Point C traffic, it was advised that SWP were mindful of the situation and in talks with the Highways team. It was noted that as the landfill site was based near Bridgwater the refuse lorries had to travel along this route. The three weekly cycle would also mean there would be less collections/vehicles on the road. New road improvements were proposed which should help with the situation during the HPC construction period.
- It was hoped that elderly and vulnerable people would not have to pay for the collection of adult hygiene products and that larger unmarked bins would be available.
- It was requested that in order to help Councillors alleviate public concern on social media, a link to useful facts be made available to help promote the Recycle More scheme.
- In response, it was advised that pending the final decision, press statements on behalf of all of the five partners would be issued and information could currently be found on the SWP website. Everything would be done to reassure people.

The Chairman thanked David Mansell for his presentation and time taken in answering questions.

Following the presentation, the Chairman moved to exclude the press and public during the debate of the report.

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the report relating to item C71 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during this report, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows:

The report contained information that could release confidential information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was therefore agreed that after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Lead Member for Environment presented the report and went on to propose the recommendation in the report, with an amendment to be made to delete reference to Full Council, which was seconded by Councillor S Pugsley.

RESOLVED that the business case for Recycle More be supported and the Asset Management Group be instructed to consider the future use of the Roughmoor Depot.

The meeting closed at 6.03 pm