

**WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2015 at 4.30 pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Williton**

**Present:**

Councillor G S Dowding ..... Chairman  
Councillor A F Knight..... Vice-Chairman

Councillor M J Chilcott	Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor J Freeman	Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor A P Hadley	Councillor B Heywood
Councillor K V Kravis	Councillor E May
Councillor K M Mills	Councillor C Morgan
Councillor P H Murphy	Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor D D Ross	Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor L W Smith	Councillor M A Smith
Councillor T Taylor	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor D J Westcott

**Officers in Attendance:**

Chief Executive (P James)  
Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (B Lang)  
Director of Operations/Section 151 Officer (S Adam)  
Finance Manager (S Plenty)  
Director – Growth and Development (B Cleere)  
CIM Fund Manager (L Redston)  
Housing Initiatives Implementation Officer (A Devine)  
New Nuclear Programme Manager (A Goodchild)  
Economic Regeneration Manager (C Matthews)  
Director – Housing and Communities (J Barraha)  
Assistant Director – Property and Development (K Ibezi)  
Principal Benefits Officer (M Antonelli)  
Media and Communications Officer (D Rundle)  
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

**C124     Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H J W Davies, I R Melhuish and K J Ross.

**C125     Minutes**

(Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 18 February and 25 February 2015, circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meetings of Council held on 18 February and 25 February 2015 be confirmed as correct records.

**C126**      **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:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Member of</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Cllr S Y Goss	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr L W Smith	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

**C127**      **Public Participation**

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

**C128**      **Chairman's Announcements**

16 March 2015	Attended the Pupil Parliament held in the Council Chamber, West Somerset House
17 March 2015	Attended the Bath & North Somerset Council's Annual Civic Reception in Bath
March 2015	Attended the funeral of WSC's past Chairman Cllr Pam Driver

The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, conveyed good wishes to Councillor K J Ross on his continued recovery.

**C129**      **HPC Section 106 Agreement – Allocations of Housing Funding**

(Report No. WSC 56/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of Cabinet regarding the recommendations of the Hinkley Point Planning Obligations Board (POB) for the allocation of Housing Fund monies secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point. The report related to the recommendations made by Cabinet at its meeting held on 4 March 2015 in relation to the YMCA Somerset Coast and SHAL Housing Association schemes. Since the Cabinet meeting on 4 March 2014 Officers, having noted the recommendations regarding the two proposals from LV Property Rentals Ltd at Paragon Laundry and Monmouth Street, had worked with Officers at Sedgemoor to reassess these schemes. The outcome of these deliberations would be considered further at the meeting of Cabinet on 1 April 2015 and by full Council on 15 April 2015.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report advising that Cabinet had considered the report. He provided further details on the applications for the release of funding from the Housing Contribution Fund for the Prospect House Routes Youth Hub development and the housing enabling scheme at the former Withycutter site.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor E May.

Members were fully supportive of both schemes and various questions and issues were raised regarding the Prospect House project. It was noted that the YMCA was carrying out fantastic work by helping and fully integrating with the local young people, and that both projects had tangible assets to support the communities and would deliver results to those most vulnerable.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the allocation of £37,800 (£36,000 grant to YMCA Somerset Coast, plus £1,800 administrative fee) from the Housing Contribution Fund for the Routes Youth Hub at Prospect House, Minehead be approved.

**RESOLVED (2)** that SHAL Housing Association be granted £80,000 from the Housing Contribution Fund for the housing enabling scheme at the former Withycutter site with the conditions contained in section 6.9 of the report.

**C130**      **Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy and Discretionary Housing Payment Policy**

(Report No. WSC 50/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline the Council's approach to awarding Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) and Discretionary Rebates in Council Tax liability and to seek Full Council's agreement to revise our policies from 1 April 2015.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer presented the item and provided Members with the background information, highlighting the key points from the report and drawing attention to the summary of policy changes.

The Lead Member went on to propose the recommendation which was duly seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

A question was asked in regard to the breakdown of DHP spending and whether Members could be provided with a more detailed breakdown of the figures relating to customers out of work and the Principal Benefits Officer advised that the system of reporting on DHP did not allow for a further breakdown. The point was made that the Policy was robust and each application for DHP was looked at on its own merit and an income and expenditure assessment was completed for each case.

In response to a question regarding next year's allocation to the Council Tax Rebate Scheme it was confirmed that the sum would be allocated via the preceptors and performance was managed and monitored monthly.

**RESOLVED** that the revised policies for Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax liability (Appendix 1 of the report) and Discretionary Housing Payments (Appendix 2 of the report) be agreed to be applied from 1 April 2015.

**C131**     **Hinkley Point C: Land Management and Skills Scheme Allocation**

(Report No. WSC 49/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline proposals relating to the Land Management and Skills Scheme allocation that forms part of the mitigation activity for the Visual Amenity elements of the HPC Site Preparation S106 Agreement.

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth presented the report and provided background information, advising that £127,000 had been allocated via the Section 106 agreement for the purposes of implementing a scheme for young people to learn the necessary skills to manage the Quantock and Vale landscapes, and for a traditional skills scheme involving funding for anyone to learn traditional skills. She highlighted the key consultees and the range of providers involved in the proposals and provided a summary of the three activities. The Lead Member drew Members' attention to the fact that the Council's Economic Development team would be retaining £50,000 to enable them to identify other programmes of activity and lever in additional monies through match funding. Reassurance was provided that this would be consulted upon through the usual democratic process and that partners would also be fully consulted.

She went on to propose the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

**RESOLVED** that the drawdown of the HPC S106 Landscape Skills allocation of £127,000 to support the delivery of the three areas of activity, as detailed in paragraph 5 and Appendix A of the report, be approved.

**C132**     **HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocations of CIM Funding**

(Report No. WSC 51/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board and West Somerset Council Cabinet, 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; and to present the recommendation of Stogursey Parish Council and West Somerset Council Cabinet for the allocation of monies from the Stogursey Contribution Fund secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and provided information on each of the four applications submitted for consideration by the Planning Obligations Board. She informed that those bids that worked within the section 106 agreement by proving the links and mitigating against the impacts of the Hinkley development were praised by the Board and it was hoped these good examples would encourage other applicants to come forward with effective bids.

The Lead Member went on to propose the recommendations contained within the report which were seconded by Councillor M J Chilcott.

Council was informed by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee that there had been a request by the Committee to review the process by which CIM funds were allocated and it was envisaged that by jointly working with the Sedgemoor District Council's Scrutiny Officer a joint scrutiny could be undertaken after the May election.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the decisions of Cabinet on 4 March 2015 be noted, as follows:

- To award £13000 from the Community Impact Mitigation fund to Williton Bowling Club for improvements to the bowling green.
- To not award funding to the Victoria Park Community Centre of £1760 towards the PC and internet access project on the basis that the application did not sufficiently demonstrate the projects ability to deliver its aims and did not demonstrate how the project would effectively mitigate impacts relating to the HPC development.
- To award £2640 from the Stogursey Contribution Fund to Stogursey Parish Council to enable the purchase of bespoke earplugs for residents of Shurton and Burton with the aim of mitigating the impacts of external noise for residents closest to the site boundaries of the Hinkley Point C development.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the recommendations of Cabinet and the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board be endorsed, as follows:

- To award £110,000 from the Community Impact Mitigation Fund to Westfield United Reform Church to provide a permanent Street Café with extended opening hours subject to the conditions recommended by the Planning Obligations Board.

- To not award funding to the Roadwater Village Trust of £25,000 towards the Roadwater Community Playground project on the basis that the application did not demonstrate how the Hinkley Point C development will have a significant impact on the community in Roadwater or how the project will mitigate impacts for the wider community in West Somerset.

**C133 Hinkley Point C – Project Update and Section 106 Agreement Staff Allocations for Approval**

(Report No. WSC 52/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to set out the latest position on the Hinkley Point C project and in light of that for Full Council to consider Cabinet's recommendations for proposals to allocate the staff resources set out in the Development Consent Order Section 106 agreement. The report also sought to remind Members of the contributions which are due to be paid to West Somerset Council from the DCO Section 106 agreement and set out the process for how those funds are to be managed and spent.

The Lead Member for Environment - Hinkley presented the item advising that the proposal would finalise the establishment of the new team which was a necessity for West Somerset Council in terms of responding to the responsibilities of the Hinkley Point C project. He drew Members' attention to the staffing structure of the New Nuclear Programme Team and proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor E May.

**RESOLVED (1)** that remaining £209,000 from the Site Preparation Works Section 106 Agreement relating to staff resources be allocated to continue to employ the existing posts holders either post 'transition' as part of the New Nuclear Programme Team structure or prior to 'transition' via a further 4 month contract extension.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the structure be supported and progressed in line with funding plans and that the £2,603,572 which the Council will receive from the DCO Section 106 agreement be allocated to support the funding of the structure set out in the structure report at Appendix B.

**C134 New Nuclear Programme Manager – Upgrade of Post to Assistant Director**

(Report No. WSC 53/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek the Council's approval to upgrade the post of New Nuclear Programme Manager to that of an Assistant Director.

The Lead Member for Environment - Hinkley presented the report and proposed the recommendation which was duly seconded by Councillor A F Knight.

Clarification was provided on the remit of the post of Assistant Director – Energy Infrastructure and Members were advised that although the core purpose remained the delivery of the new nuclear programme, the post was designed to encompass other wider energy infrastructure projects.

Members noted the staffing structure and were fully supportive of the post upgrade.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the proposal to upgrade the post of New Nuclear Programme Manager to Assistant Director be approved.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the additional cost of this proposal being entirely catered for within the staff resource funding plans for the New Nuclear Programme Team, reported to Cabinet on 4 March 2015 and appearing as a separate item on the agenda to this meeting, be noted.

**RESOLVED (3)** that the decisions made by West Somerset Council being considered by Taunton Deane Borough Council, in its role as employing authority, at its Council Meeting of 31 March 2015, be noted.

**C135      Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy 2015/16**

(Report No. WSC 55/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this report was to obtain approval by Council of the proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (MRP) for 2015/16 in line with the statutory and regulatory guidance.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support introduced the item and the Finance Manager provided the background information contained within the report, as well as highlighting the key points contained within the TMSS, AIS and the MRP Policy.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations contained within the report which were duly seconded by Councillor M J Chilcott.

Clarification was provided by the Section 151 Officer on capital expenditure relating to non-WSC assets, and it was suggested that Arlingclose, the Council's treasury advisors, be invited to attend a Members' briefing, post the May 2015 elections, in order to provide further understanding on such technical financial matters.

The Section 151 Officer and Finance Manager provided further detailed information on matters relating to internal and external borrowing and money market investments.

Members noted an error in Appendix B to the report 'Existing investment and debt portfolio position' and that Net Debt should read Net Investments.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the combined Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy for 2015/16 be approved.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the Prudential Indicators contained within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement be noted.

**C136**      **Creation of the Somerset Building Control Partnership**

(Report No. WSC 54/15, circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the report be deferred until the next meeting of Council held on 15 April 2015.

**C137**      **Watchet Harbour Cargo Shed Demolition Report**

(Report No. WSC 61/15, circulated prior to the meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to secure authorisation and funding for the urgent demolition of the Watchet Harbour Cargo Shed as a result of significant health and safety concerns and risk to life and limb.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item. She provided details of the background information and explained the reasons for the urgency to carry out the demolition works. Other options had been discussed but none were deemed viable. She went on to say how impressed she was with the expertise and knowledge of the Council's Property Services team. The Lead Member drew attention to the Section 151 Officer comments contained within the report, advised that the relevant parties had been informed about the situation and confirmed that the site had now been emptied and was securely locked and, if approved, work would start as soon as possible.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- The Council owed a duty of care and should act reasonably and responsibly.
- The Leader reminded Members of the resolution agreed by full Council on 26 March 2014 (Minute No. C148 refers) regarding the approval of a supplementary lease with the Watchet marina operator which stated that it was the marine operator's responsibility to demolish the cargo shed; and informed that if the decision was approved for the Council to demolish the cargo shed then this would make the previous resolution null and void.
- It was requested that consultation with the Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee be undertaken to explain fully the reasons of what was proposed.
- Concern was expressed about the funding of future capital projects and it was agreed to arrange for an update to be provided.
- The site should be revalued following the demolition.



- It was imperative to maintain checks to ensure that the Council's assets were safe and were being used properly, safely and efficiently and there was an intention to carry out an asset management plan in order to prioritise work.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the building be demolished to ground level urgently, using the revised tender submission from the specialist demolition contractor.

**RESOLVED (2)** that a Supplementary Estimate for the 2015/16 Capital Programme of £50,000 be approved, funded by unallocated capital receipts, to undertake the demolition of the Watchet Harbour Cargo Shed and related works.

**NOTE:** Having regard to the special circumstances pertaining in relation to this item – namely due to the health and safety of the public – the Chairman was of the opinion that, despite its non-inclusion on the agenda, this item should be considered at this meeting as a matter of urgency.

The meeting closed at 6.31 pm