

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of Council held on 19 July 2017 at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Williton

Present:

Councillor B Heywood Chairman
Councillor R Woods Vice-Chairman

Councillor I Aldridge	Councillor A Behan
Councillor M J Chilcott	Councillor H J W Davies
Councillor M O A Dewdney	Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor A P Hadley	Councillor I Jones
Councillor A Kingston-James	Councillor K M Mills
Councillor P H Murphy	Councillor J Parbrook
Councillor P Pilkington	Councillor R Thomas
Councillor N Thwaites	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor T Venner
Councillor D J Westcott	

Officers in Attendance:

Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director Energy Infrastructure (A Goodchild)
Assistant Director Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Corporate Strategy and Performance Officer (R Doyle)
Principal Revenues & Debt Recovery Officer (D Emery)
Senior Economic Development Officer (G Dwyer)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

C16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Clifford, G S Dowding, T Hall, R Lillis, B Maitland-Walker, C Morgan and S Pugsley.

C17 Minutes

(Minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on 10 May 2017, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that, subject to adding Councillor P Pilkington to the Scrutiny Committee membership list; amending the municipal year to 2017-2018 within Minutes Nos. C11 and C12; and updating Minute No. C11 to appoint Councillor G S Dowding as the Council's representative (and to delete the deputy appointment) on the Somerset Building Preservation Trust, the Minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on 10 May 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

C18 **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 M Chilcott	All	SCC	Spoke and voted
Cllr H Davies	All	SCC	Spoke and voted
Cllr S Goss	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr A Kingston-James	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr P Pilkington	All	Timberscombe	Spoke and voted
Cllr R Thomas	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All	Dulverton	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	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr A Hadley	C22	In receipt of mandatory SBRR	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr P Murphy	C22	In receipt of mandatory SBRR	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr A Trollope-Bellew	C22	In receipt of mandatory SBRR	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr T Venner	C22	In receipt of SBRR	Prejudicial	Left the chamber

C19 **Public Participation**

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

C20 **Chairman's Announcements**

21 May 2017	Attended Mayor of Taunton Deane Borough Council Civic Service at St James' Church, Taunton
19 June 2017	Armed Forces Day Event at West Somerset House
9 July 2017	Attended the Dulverton Weir and Leat Conservation Trust's Garden Party

The Vice-Chairman represented the Council at the Somerset Masons Service in Wells Cathedral and also attended the Minehead Lifeboat Annual Sea Sunday Service.

The Chairman requested a minute's silence as part of the UK's Srebrenica Memorial Week to remember and reflect on the atrocities which took place 22 years ago.

C21 **Corporate Plan 2017/18 Update**

(Report No. WSC 78/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to introduce and finalise the draft Corporate Plan for 2017/18 as it continued through the democratic process.

The Leader of Council presented the report and provided background information. He went on to propose the recommendation which was duly seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

Specific reference was made to the rollout to staff of the 'Slack' social media business tool. Members did not yet have access to Slack and were advised that it would be developed further as part of the Transformation programme. Members were keen to access the system as it was seen to be a good communication tool and a quick way to resolve any issues or concerns. The Corporate Strategy and Performance Officer agreed to contact the Transformation Communications Officer in this regard.

RESOLVED that the adoption of the Corporate Plan for 2017/18 be supported.

C22 **Proposed Changes to Business Rates Relief Policy**

(Report No. WSC 77/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide information on the background and context for updating the Business Rates Relief Policy for 2017/18.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and provided background information contained within the report. Attention was drawn to the proposed policy changes for 2017/18, particularly to the types of premises who currently received Mandatory Relief that would benefit from the government's announcement concerning Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR).

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor D Westcott.

It was noted that government had recently issued further guidance with regards to the Revaluation Relief, and the Principal Revenues and Debt Recovery Officer advised he would be presenting a report to the 3 August Scrutiny Committee providing further detail on the subsequent policy.

Members then asked some detailed questions in relation to SBRR.

RESOLVED (1) that the use of the Council's local discount powers from 1 April 2017 be supported to:

- a) grant 100% Rural Rate Relief to eligible ratepayers;
- b) grant a local discount of £1,500 a year for local newspapers;
- c) introduce the Supporting Small Businesses Relief Scheme from 1 April 2017;
- d) introduce the Business Rate Relief Scheme for pubs from 1 April 2017.

RESOLVED (2) that the proposed updates to the Council's Business Rates Relief Policy for 2017/18 shown in Appendix 1 to the report be supported.

RESOLVED (3) that it be noted that the Government has announced funding over four years from 2017-18 for English billing authorities to provide discretionary transitional support for businesses facing significant increases in their business rates bills following the revaluation. Introduction of discretionary transitional support will require Member approval and a report will follow after the Government has provided more information and consultation between West Somerset Council and the major preceptors has taken place.

C23 **Hinkley Point C Section 106 Development Consent Obligation – Skills and Training Contribution**

(Report No. WSC 75/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline proposals relating to the Skills and Training contribution for West Somerset that forms part of the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Section 106 Development Consent Obligations (DCO) Agreement.

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth outlined the details of the report, providing further information on the projects. He went on to propose the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor R Woods.

Members expressed support for the proposed activity and the following main points were raised:

- The proposals would help young people in West Somerset to be able to locally access and improve their skills in the tourism and hospitality industry.
- It was important that local employers in other tourist locations outside of the Minehead area also be included.
- It was felt that there was scope for this type of proposed investment to look at other industries in West Somerset, e.g. Hinkley Point, to host employer visits or apprenticeships in the future.

- Members were in favour of the opportunities and support that the apprenticeship proposals would offer.
- West Somerset would benefit greatly and it was felt that this would help to improve the perception of the area.
- Members were updated on a range of projects being undertaken with other sectors of industry.
- It was confirmed that there was a specific need for tourism based skills and training programmes in West Somerset.

RESOLVED that the proposals detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report and the drawdown of £30,000 from the HPC DCO Skills and Training contribution to support a variety of skills related activity with the intention to support and grow economic development in West Somerset and to maximise opportunities associated with the HPC project be agreed.

C24 **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2016/17**

(Report No. WSC 76/17, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to review the treasury management activity and the performance against Prudential Indicators for the 2016/17 financial year as prescribed by the revised CIPFA Code of Practice and in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Policy.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and went on to propose the recommendation of the report which was duly seconded by Councillor N Thwaites.

Discussion centred around the Council's proposals to generate additional income and funding investment opportunities.

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Outturn Report for the 2016/17 financial year (Appendix A and B to the report) be approved.

C25 **Composition of Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs) for 2017/18**

The Council's Constitution states that the core membership of the PAGs will be agreed annually by full Council. Given that there is currently one PAG – the Corporate PAG – it would be appropriate for there to be no specified core membership. Corporate PAG will be chaired by the Leader, or deputy Leader in his absence.

RESOLVED that the position be noted.

C26 **Minutes and Notes for Information**

(Minutes and Notes relating to this item, circulated via the Council's website.)

RESOLVED (1) that the notes of the Exmoor Area Panel meeting held on 2 March 2017 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the notes of the Minehead Area Panel meetings held on 8 March and 13 June 2017 be noted.

RESOLVED (3) that the notes of the Dunster Area Panel meeting held on 18 April 2017 be noted.

RESOLVED (4) that the notes of the Watchet, Williton and Quantock Vale Area Panel held on 14 March 2017 be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm.