

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 October 2014 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 A P Hadley
Councillor K V Kravis	Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor E May	Councillor K M Mills
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor S J Pugsley	Councillor D D Ross
Councillor K J 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)
Assistant Director – Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Assistant Director – Planning and Environment (T Burton)
Planning Policy Manager (N Bryant)
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)
PR and Communications Officer (D Rundle)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

C54 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H J W Davies, S Y Goss, B Heywood and I R Melhuish.

C55 Minutes

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 September 2014, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that, subject to amending the last paragraph of Minute No. C51 to read “In response, the officer confirmed that discussions with Somerset County Council regarding their ability to run the project on the Council’s behalf would remain an opportunity in the future.”, the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 17 September 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

C56 **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 P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	All	Dulverton	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

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr M J Chilcott	C61	Council rep on Minehead Vision Group	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr A P Hadley	C61	Council rep on Minehead Vision Group	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr R P Lillis	C61	Council rep on Minehead Vision Group	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K M Mills	C61	Council rep on Minehead Vision Group	Personal	Spoke and voted

C57 **Public Participation**

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

C58 **Chairman's Announcements**

20 September 2014	Attended the Williton WW! Remembrance Service at Williton War Memorial Ground
6 October 2014	Lunch with the High Sheriff
12 October 2014	Attended the Bath and North East Somerset Civic Service
19 October 2014	Attended the commemoration of Harold Gimblett at Bicknoller Church, and the Chairman requested Members to put forward suitable candidates who were born in or had close links to West Somerset which WSC commemorate
19 October 2014	Attended the Watchet Seafarer's Service

In addition, Councillor M O A Dewdney provided information on an NFU 'Farming in Somerset 2014' event which he attended on behalf of the Chairman.

C59 **Making of Executive Decisions by Individual Members of Cabinet**

(Report No. WSC 143/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Council with the opportunity of reviewing the current practice of individual Members of Cabinet not exercising the option of making executive decisions.

The report was presented by Councillor S J Pugsley, Lead Member for Executive Support and Democracy who advised that there was merit in reintroducing the process of making executive decisions by Cabinet members particularly in relation to the joint working arrangements with Taunton Deane Borough Council and the establishment of the one team of officers.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation contained in the report which was seconded by Councillor M O A Dewdney.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- It was thought that the safeguards were adequate and for sake of efficiency the process was supported in principle.
- An amendment to the Decision Making Process Flowchart for decisions delegation to officers was suggested so that officers should consult Members if appropriate.
- The Monitoring Officer advised that there were new regulations pertaining to the legal requirements for record keeping of an officer and he was currently researching the matter.
- The question was asked - what decisions taken in the last year could have been taken more expeditiously had this process already been in practice?
- The need for urgent decision making was appreciated.
- The Monitoring Officer provided examples of the types of decisions that could be made using this process.
- The whole of the Council's democracy process should be examined.
- In addition to the executive decision making practice there were efficiency gains to be had across WSC and TDBC by aligning processes and working more consistently, examples given were reformatting committee reports so that one report on the same topic could be presented to both councils, and examining the merit of aligning the Scheme of Delegations so the two councils were working in a similar way whilst still retaining their own sovereignty.
- The majority of councils, including TDBC, operate the process of making executive decisions by individual members of Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the use of the making of executive decisions by individual Members of Cabinet in accordance with the process currently set out in the Constitution be reintroduced.

C60 **West Somerset Local Plan – Request for Additional Budget**

(Report No. WSC 137/14 circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek Council approval for the provision of a supplementary estimate of £74,750 in 2014/15 and 2015/16. Subject to approval this budget will allow for the progression of the West Somerset Local Plan to publication.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the item and provided Members with the background information. He went on to propose the recommendations in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor D J Westcott.

On consideration of the report, the following main points were made:

- It was important to make an annual provision for any additional costs to the local plan as moving goal posts made it difficult to budget for.
- A request was made as to whether some of the budget could be used to publicise the public consultations better and to go towards completing the design brief.
- Need to ensure getting value for money in light of the financial challenges facing the Council.
- In light of concerns raised regarding the breakdown of anticipated costs, the Planning Policy Manager advised that the costs were as reasonable an estimate as could be provided.

RESOLVED (1) that a supplementary estimate request of £74,750 to cover additional costs arising and relating to West Somerset Local Plan preparation through to examination and beyond to adoption be approved. Of this sum, £18,400 to be added to the Planning Policy Budget in 2014/15, with the balance of £56,350 transferred to a Planning Policy earmarked reserve to be drawn down in 2015/16.

RESOLVED (2) that the supplementary estimate be funded by General Fund Reserve balances.

RESOLVED (3) the requirement for Local Plan funding on an ongoing basis be noted, and the addition of an annual provision within the Medium Term Financial Plan from 2016/17 onwards be supported.

C61 **Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding**

(Report No. WSC 144/14 circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support who provided details on how the allocation of the Section 106 Agreement with Morrison Supermarkets had been spent so far, stating that it had been challenging to find projects that met the criteria of the Agreement. She further advised that the remainder of monies had to be committed by 1 April 2015 and suggestions on how to spend it were very welcome. The Lead Member went on to draw Members' attention to the different elements of the Minehead Heritage Trail project and the cost breakdown, which included a provision for ongoing maintenance.

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

The Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager responded to concerns regarding the cost breakdown figures and advised that information to back up the costings was available to Members on request. She also confirmed that the land where the archway would be situated had been designated as Morrisons land and confirmation had been received that they would be happy to look after it; and the MIC would have ownership of the project.

Members were in agreement that it was vital that the remainder of the Section 106 money was allocated in order to benefit Minehead and residents, to increase footfall between Morrisons and the town, to promote businesses and what the town has to offer. A proposal to extend the pilot of illuminated trees along The Avenue was suggested as a way to spend the money.

Reference was made to the method in which Section 106 legal agreements were negotiated and the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support advised that there was a need to look at these procedures in light of recent changes to legislation. The Assistant Director – Planning and Environment advised that there was a different solution to the problem and the introduction of a community infrastructure levy would help but this could only happen once the Local Plan was adopted.

RESOLVED that the allocation of £48,053.97 for Minehead Heritage Trail to be added to the capital programme and funded from planning obligations contributions be agreed.

C62 **Minutes and Notes for Information**

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

RESOLVED (1) that the minutes of the Watchet Harbour Advisory Panel held on 16 July 2014 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the notes of the Minehead Area Panel held on 10 September 2014 be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.07 pm