

**WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 July 2014 at 4.30 pm**

**in the Council Chamber, Williton**

**Present:**

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

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

**Officers in Attendance:**

Director of Operations (S Adam)  
Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (B Lang)  
HR & OD Manager (Fiona Wills)  
Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development (S Lewis)  
Assistant Director – Corporate Services (R Sealy)  
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)  
Finance Manager (S Plenty)  
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

**C29      Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H J W Davies, P N Grierson, R P Lillis, C Morgan, P H Murphy, K J Ross and M A Smith.

**C30      Minutes**

(Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18 June 2014 circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that subject to deleting the words ‘to maintain the Weir and’ in the third line of the third paragraph of Minute No. C21, the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 18 June 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

**C31      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 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 interest was declared:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Description of interest</b>	<b>Personal or Prejudicial</b>	<b>Action Taken</b>
Cllr A P Hadley	C34	Shop owner selling tobacco	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber

**C32 Public Participation**

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

**C33 Chairman's Announcements**

23 June 2014	Attended the Armed Forces Day Celebration at West Somerset Council Offices
23 June 2014	Attended the West Somerset College Sixth Form Presentation Evening
28 June 2014	Attended the unveiling of the Watchet War Memorial
9 July 2014	Attended 40 Commando Open Day
14 July 2014	Attended the West Somerset College Key Stage 4 Presentation Evening
16 July 2014	Attended Home Start AGM
22 July 2014	Preview visit of the Police Custody Suite at Bridgwater

**C34 Tobacco Declaration**

(Report No. WSC 112/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline the issues relating to tobacco, health and wellbeing; to recommend that Council signs the Tobacco Declaration, and to consider the possible actions the Council could deliver.

The report was presented in detail by the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing who proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor D Ross.

The Leader advised that he was supportive and prepared to sign the Tobacco Declaration as it was now evident that WSC could put the intentions of the Tobacco Declaration into practice. He advised that the Council was now a member of the West Somerset Health Forum and held regular discussions with the Williton Health Practice; and he hoped that by continuing to work in partnership with the health and education authorities the Council would play a key role in tackling health and wellbeing issues for the people of West Somerset.

In response to a question regarding the erection of smokefree play area signs in West Somerset Council owned play parks, the Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development confirmed that the intention was to speak to the other parish/town councils to encourage them to do the same.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the Health and Wellbeing Board recommendations be endorsed.

**RESOLVED (2)** that the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control be signed.

**RESOLVED (3)** that the SCC request to the Pensions Committee to reconsider its investment policy in relation to the tobacco industry be supported.

**C35**      **Supplementary Budget Allocations 2014/15**

(Report No. WSC 111/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to request approval of the Council for two supplementary budget allocations for the 2014/15 Revenue Budget.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and proposed the recommendation contained in the report which was seconded by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- Due to the numerous complaints received from the public about the sand on the sea front it was suggested that perhaps a regular smaller sum could be put aside in future budgets for clearing the drains and gullies.
- An ongoing, regular maintenance program was required to effectively clear the drains and gullies.
- The work that was being carried out was very much appreciated and would help relationships between WSC and Minehead Town Council.
- Reference was made to the asset management implications contained within the report and that there was still a lot of work to be done.

- The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support stressed that the proposals had derived from listening to the people of Minehead and the Town Council, and gave reassurance that WSC would do its utmost best to support requests where affordable. The monies on this occasion were able to be allocated using the net underspend in 2013/14 and members and officers were congratulated on making this possible. She went on to thank the Chief Executive who had led conversations with the town council and stated that this was a prime example of the benefits of a wider management team in terms of better manpower and resources.

**RESOLVED** that the Supplementary Budget allocations of £5,500 for improvements to Blenheim Gardens and £10,000 for sand clearance from drains and gullies on the seafront in Minehead, making use of 2013/14 budget underspend, be approved.

**C36**      **Joint Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration**

(Report No. WSC 106/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval for a proposal to expand the membership of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel to include Mendip District Council.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Executive Support and Democracy.

A question was raised about the procedure for dealing with future requests from Councils to join the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, and whether the decision needed to go to Full Council for approval, or could it be devolved to an officer. The Assistant Chief Executive responded that he had no objection to delegate the decision to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to determine any future requests to expand the Panel.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation, as amended, which was seconded by Councillor E May.

**RESOLVED** that the expansion of the Joint Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration to include Mendip District Council be approved and authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to take detailed decisions necessary to establish the new Joint Panel, to include dealing with any further requests from Councils within Somerset for the expansion of the Panel.

**C37**      **Southwest Audit Partnership Governance Arrangements**

(Report No. WSC 107/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to propose a change to the West Somerset Council "Director" to the Southwest Audit Partnership (SWAP) to reflect the responsibilities of the new Joint Management Team (JMT).

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor D Ross.

**RESOLVED** that the following nominations be approved:

- (i) the Assistant Director – Resources as the Council's Director on the Board of SWAP; and
- (ii) the Assistant Director – Corporate Services as the Alternate Director.

**C38**      **Allocation of HPC Section 106 Tourism Information Funds**

(Report No. WSC 108/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to consult with Council on a suggested approach for the allocation of the HPC Section 106 Phase 2 (Part 1) Visitor Information funds.

The Lead Member for Economic Regeneration and Tourism presented the report in detail and highlighted the fact that all 2014/15, and future, Tourism Information Centres (TICs) would be subject to a Service Level Agreement that clearly set out the levels of activity, monitoring and information that the Council would require from the individual Centres. She went on to acknowledge the strong negotiation skills of the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager who had secured and was continuing to secure a significant amount of funding, and also recognised the great commitment of the TIC paid and volunteer staff.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations contained in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor M O A Dewdney.

The Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager noted and answered a range of questions from Members relating to the following main issues:

- National advertising/social media campaigns run by the TICs.
- Wider tourism mitigation funds and coastal tourism.
- The need for more innovative ways to promote the whole of West Somerset as a tourist destination.
- The importance of having an up to date database of tourism related businesses and the use of place based marketing in TICs.
- The funding would provide a great opportunity to upgrade TIC equipment and buildings.
- Concerns relating to the lack of rebranding and promotion of Dunster.
- The possibility of investigating visitation patterns to find out what visitors want and what would encourage them to stay for longer in the district.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the allocation of the Phase 2 (Part One) S106 Tourism allocation of £50,000 to those Local Authorities and Visitor Centres named within the Section 106 Agreement be approved, as follows:

(i) £20,000 to West Somerset Council for the purpose of supporting Minehead, Porlock and Watchet Tourism Information Centres.

(ii) £15,000 to Sedgemoor District Council for the purpose of supporting Burnham-on-Sea Tourism Information Centre.

(iii) £15,000 to Somerset County Council for the purposes of supporting the Sedgemoor Services Visitor Centre (located on the M5).

**RESOLVED (2)** that, in respect of this allocation, an addition expenditure budget of £50,000 to the Revenue Budget for Tourism Information Centres with a corresponding income budget of £50,000 for the S106 Contribution be approved.

**C39**      **Annual Treasury Management Review 2013/14**

(Report No. WSC 110/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to review the treasury management activity and the performance against the Prudential Indicators for the 2013/14 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 proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

**RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management activity for the 2013/14 financial year, attached as Appendix A to the report, be noted.

**C40**      **Member Reporting on Membership of Outside Body for information**

(The following reports were circulated with the Agenda:

- Somerset Passenger (Public) Transport Forum by Councillor A Trollope-Bellew
- Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee by Councillor G S Dowding
- Exmoor Tourism Partnership by Councillor K Mills
- Local Action for Rural Communities by Councillor K Mills
- Into Somerset (Inward Investment) by Councillor K Mills)

The Chairman thanked those Councillors who had submitted reports.

**RESOLVED** that the reports on membership of outside bodies be noted.

**C41 Minutes and Notes for Information**

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

**RESOLVED** that the draft notes of the Minehead Area Panel held on 11 June 2014 be noted.

**C42 Approval of Redundancies**

(Report No. WSC 109/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to request Council to approve the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (WSC) with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead (TDBC) with effect from 28 February 2015. The necessary financial approvals are already in place via the Business Case for Joint Management and Shared Services. This request for Full Council approval is a separate requirement of the Council's HR policies.

The report was presented by the Lead Member of Resources and Central Support who welcomed Fiona Wills, HR Manager, to the meeting. She advised that WSC had approved the business case and the formation of the new management team; HR had carried out an enormous amount of work to comply with all relevant employment law and policies; and the redundancies had been approved in principle as part of the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project. She reported that TDBC had approved the decision at their Council meeting on 22 July 2014.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation which was duly seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

In response to a question, the HR Manager confirmed that approval was needed by both Councils and if one Council determined not to approve the redundancies it would have to be put on hold to review the decision to see what the impact of this would be; there would also be a risk of challenge by the affected post holders.

Due to the situation surrounding the Council's finances and the budget deficit, concern was expressed regarding the redundancy implications including the pay in lieu of notice, how much had been spent on redundancies so far and how much further was the Council expected to spend going forward under the JMASS project.

The Lead Member clarified that the payment in lieu of notice was due to not working the notice period either because of an operational reason or the necessity to implement a new structure. She further informed that in the autumn there would be a review of the JMASS project and an update on redundancies would be provided.

**RESOLVED** that the redundancies of the Revenues, Benefits and Debt Recovery Manager (WSC) with effect from 31 July 2014 and the Planning Policy Lead (TDBC) with effect from 28 February 2015 be approved in accordance with the financial details set out in Appendices A and B to the report.

The meeting closed at 6.06 pm