

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of Council held on 23 November 2016 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 M O Dewdney
Councillor G S Dowding	Councillor S Goss
Councillor A Hadley	Councillor I Jones
Councillor B Leaker	Councillor B Maitland-Walker
Councillor K M Mills	Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor J Parbrook	Councillor S J Pugsley
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:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Assistant Director Planning and Environment (T Burton)
Performance and Development Manager (S Doyle)
Planning Policy Manager (N Bryant)
Principal Planning Officer – Policy (M Wilsher)
Principal Planning Officer – Policy (T Clempson)
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

C52 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Clifford, H Davies, T Hall and C Morgan.

C53 Minutes

(Minutes of the meetings of Special Council and Council held on 21 September 2016, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED (1) that the Minutes of the meeting of Special Council held on 21 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

RESOLVED (2) that the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 21 September 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

C54 **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 P Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All	Minehead	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 & SCC	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

In addition, Councillor R Woods declared a prejudicial interest in respect of Item 8 Adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 as the owner of a property near site WAT9 and advised that if the matter of this particular site were to be specifically discussed she would leave the Chamber during this item but would otherwise stay and participate fully in the item.

C55 **Public Participation**

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

C56 **Chairman's Announcements**

1 October 2016	Attended a service of Harvest Thanksgiving at Wells Cathedral followed by supper at the Bishop's Palace
20 October 2016	Attended SCC Chairman's Services to the Community Awards Presentation at Taunton Rugby Ground
23 October 2016	WSC Chairman's Civic Service at All Saints' Church, Dulverton
6 November 2016	SCC Chairman's Civic Service at St George's Church, Dunster
12 November 2016	Service of Remembrance at Dulverton War Memorial
13 November 2016	Attended three services to commemorate Remembrance Day at Dulverton and Minehead

In addition, the Vice-Chairman represented the Chairman of Council at three events namely the Graduation Ceremony at Bridgwater College - the eight students who graduated from West Somerset were congratulated on their achievement; opened the hardstanding on Williton War Memorial Recreation Ground; and laid a wreath at the Remembrance Service in Watchet.

C57 **Allocation of Hinkley Point C Section 106 Tourist Information Centre Funds**

(Report No. WSC 129/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to consult with Council on a suggested approach for allocating Hinkley Point C Section 106 funds for Tourist Information Centres during 2016-18; and to consult with Council on a suggested approach for commissioning tourist information services in Watchet.

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth presented the report focussing on the specific funding to the West Somerset tourist information services which supported Minehead, Watchet and Porlock. She drew attention to the rationale for allocating the monies, including the roles and responsibilities of the Tourist Information Centres (TICs) who had a pivotal role in supporting our communities. Feedback via the service level agreement was received on a regular basis from Minehead and Porlock TICs and the Lead Member provided clarification that the funding levels were proportional to the work the TICs would be performing. She also stated that as the Watchet Boat Museum was now operational, this would be a good opportunity to commission a more robust visitor information service for the town. It was noted that the proposal, if approved, would have no impact on the Council's General Fund.

Finally, the Lead Member paid tribute to the TIC volunteers and thanked them for their hard work and commitment as the TICs would not be able to operate without them.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report which were duly seconded by Councillor A Hadley.

In response to a question regarding the timescale for advertising for a tourist information services provider in Watchet, the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager advised an agreement was expected to be in place by the end of the year.

RESOLVED (1) that the allocation of £71,000 from HPC S106 allocations for tourist information centres be approved. This includes the remaining funds of £60,649.33 from the Site Preparation Works agreement, and part of the funds of £10,350.67 from the first Development Consent Order Works agreement. Staggered payments would be made in line with service level agreements with centres, which total:-

(a) £48,000 to West Somerset Council for the purposes of supporting Minehead, Porlock and Watchet tourist information services for two financial years in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

(b) £23,000 to Sedgemoor District Council for the purposes of supporting Burnham-on-Sea, Cheddar and Bridgwater tourist information services in 2016/17.

RESOLVED (2) that it be approved to advertise to the community of Watchet for a service provider for tourism information services and to delegate the commissioning of the service to the Lead Member for Economic Regeneration & Tourism and the Economic Regeneration Manager in line with a provider satisfying the requirements of the service level agreement as detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report.

RESOLVED (3) that Somerset County Council be advised that their proposed allocation of £10,000 set aside from the 2015/16 approval process will revert to the Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership fund, unless claimed by 31 March 2017.

C58 **Review of Council Tax Rebate Scheme for 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 128/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide full Council with information on our existing Council Tax Rebate scheme and the context for reviewing our scheme for Working Age applicants from 2017/18. The report advised full Council of the outcome of the public consultation as well as the Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet's recommendations on the preferred revisions to our Council Tax Rebate scheme in 2017/18. The report sought agreement from full Council on our Council Tax Rebate scheme for 2017/18.

A copy of the full, proposed Council Tax Rebate Scheme together with a detailed report, including the outcome of consultation and an Equality Impact Assessment, was circulated to all Members of the Council to increase understanding of the issues prior to a decision being taken by full Council.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report, providing detailed background information and she advised that the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet had also considered the report. Members confirmed they had read and understood the report prior to voting.

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

During the discussion, it was noted that a Hardship Fund of £22,500 was available to provide short-term help for people in desperate need.

Concern was expressed as to the impacts the amended scheme would have on vulnerable people and an amendment was proposed by Cllr T Venner and seconded by Cllr I Aldridge that no change be made to the current Council Tax Rebate scheme. A further point was made in support of the amendment which related to how the Council's Benefits team would be impacted if the Scheme were to be changed due to claims having to be reassessed, and it was considered that the administration costs would exceed the saving achieved.

It was advised that consultation on options for the CTR scheme for 2017/18 had been undertaken and the majority of responses were in favour of the changes proposed. The point was also made there were a lot of vulnerable groups, e.g. pensioners, who were excluded from the Scheme and therefore would not be affected.

On being put to the vote the amendment was LOST.

On being put to the vote the original motion was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED (1) that having regard to the consultation response and the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA - see Appendix 4 of the report), the recommendation from Cabinet to amend the current CTR scheme to that shown in Appendix 1 of the report (illustrated in Model 11) be agreed. This will revise our CTR scheme for 2017/18 to:

- (a) Reduce the maximum CTR available to people of working age to 80%; and
- (b) Align the CTR scheme for 2017/18 with changes made by the Government to other welfare benefits with the exception that applicants aged 18-21 would continue to be eligible for CTR.

RESOLVED (2) that the 2017/18 Council Tax Rebate scheme be approved for 2017/18 only.

C59

Adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032

(Report No. WSC 131/16, circulated with the Agenda.)

The Council is now in receipt of the Inspector's Report which confirms that the Plan can be legally adopted by West Somerset Council subject to the main modifications outlined in his Report (which were consulted upon). At this stage the Council cannot make substantive changes to the WSLP to 2032, it can either adopt the Plan with the main modifications or choose not to adopt. Upon adoption, the WSLP to 2032 will comprise a key component in the adopted development plan for the area. There do however, remain areas in which the Council needs to undertake further work in developing policy (as recognised in the Inspector's Report). As such, work will need to commence shortly on a review of the WSLP to 2032.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report and provided background information. Members were informed that preparation of the Plan began in 2009 and the Lead Member took the opportunity to thank all those concerned for their hard work in preparing the Local Plan. The Lead Member also advised of the implications if Members chose not to adopt the Local Plan.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor B Maitland-Walker.

The following main points were made:

- It was felt there was still a lot of strategic aspects that went alongside housing development which were missing from the Local Plan, in particular employment, economic development and infrastructure.
- The Local Plan was a living document and would be subject to an early review. The review would be undertaken in the context of resources available, taking transformation into account, with a commitment to review the Plan within three years.
- Further detail was provided on master-planning which would be carried out for the key strategic sites. Local involvement was key to developing a master-planning partnership and officers were keen to ensure an agreed and shared view on how to engage with the community. Formalised public consultation would be explored in the new year.
- Public transport was a key element to the Local Plan and it was acknowledged that this was an issue for West Somerset.
- Members were informed that Government guidance advised sites should be as sustainable as they could be and opportunities for alternative modes of transport should be provided. The identification of strategic sites would give encouragement for the provision of transport services and increase opportunities for more sustainable modes of transport within the three key settlements of Minehead, Watchet and Williton.
- The creation of more employment and allocating land for commercial use was vital; additional commercial development was required in the district.
- Officers were mindful of the employment issues and by broadening the definition of employment within the Plan to try to encourage further opportunities to expand employment ideas, and by developing self-employment and work from home policies, it was hoped people would use these policies to their best advantage.
- For budget setting purposes, the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support requested further clarification on budget requirements.

RESOLVED (1) that the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 be adopted incorporating:

- (i) the modifications as indicated in the Appendix to the Inspector's Report,
- (ii) the Additional Modifications, unchanged, which were consulted on between 3 June and 15 July 2016, and

- (iii) a renumbering of some of the policies within it for reasons of consistency and clarity.

RESOLVED (2) that the continued use of the extant policies in the West Somerset District Local Plan – Adopted, April 2006 that have not been identified for replacement by the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 be endorsed.

RESOLVED (3) that the continued use of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document as a statement of Council policy for the West Somerset Local Planning Authority area be endorsed.

C60 **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 Watchet, Williton and Quantock Vale Area Panel meeting held on 13 September 2016 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the notes of the Minehead Area Panel meeting held on 14 September 2016 be noted.

RESOLVED (3) that the notes of the Dunster Area Panel meeting held on 4 October 2016 be noted.

RESOLVED (4) that the notes of the Exmoor Area Panel meeting held on 8 November 2016 be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.45 pm