

WEST SOMERSET COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2013 at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Williton

Present:

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

Councillor A M Chick	Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor H J W Davies	Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor P N Grierson	Councillor B Heywood
Councillor E May	Councillor I R Melhuish
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 M A Smith
Councillor T Taylor	Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor D J Westcott

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (A Dyer)
Corporate Director (B Lang)
Planning Manager (A Goodchild)
Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy (I Timms)
Principal Planning Officer (Policy) (Martin Wilsher)
Principal Planning Officer (Policy) (Toby Clempson)
Economic Development Officer (G Dwyer)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

Matt Ballard, Somerset County Council (Item 5)
Tim Stokes, Exmoor National Park Authority (Item 5)

C14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Freeman, S Y Goss, A P Hadley, K V Kravis, R P Lillis and L W Smith.

C15 Minutes

(Minutes of the Meeting of Annual Council held on 15 May 2013, circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Annual Council held on 15 May 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

C16 **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 N Grierson	All	Minehead	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	All	Dulverton	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr H J W Davies	All	Somerset County	Spoke and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All	Brendon Hills	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 or Disclosable Pecuniary	Action Taken
Cllr H J W Davies	C25	In receipt of business rate relief	Disclosable Pecuniary	Left the Chamber
Cllr C Morgan	C22	Stogursey resident	Personal	Spoke and voted

C17 **Public Participation**

Robert Macdonald, Williton Parish Council, spoke in relation to Agenda Item 12 - Consultation Responses to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Strategy Paper on optimising the number and location of interim Intermediate Level Waste Storage facilities in England and Wales and Optimising the number and location of FED Treatment (Dissolution) Facilities in Magnox Limited, and advised that NDA's proposal was not something that Somerset would take lightly and there needed to be proper consultation and real consideration for the county and the environment. Future generations needed to be safe guarded as there were no safe assurances and if an accident were to occur in the future it would be catastrophic. The immediate effects on the present infrastructure also needed to be considered and honest answers were required before agreeing to such a big commitment.

Suzette Jones also spoke in relation to Agenda Item 12 and urged Members to object most strongly, to oppose NDA's proposal and to consider the health of future generations and other safety risks. She differentiated between the building of Hinkley Point C and the storage of additional waste from other stations at Hinkley A and emphasised that the waste should be kept and treated on the sites where it was produced.

C18 **Broadband**

The Chairman introduced and welcomed Matt Ballard from Somerset County Council and Tim Stokes from Exmoor National Park Authority who made a presentation on broadband and the associated problems which face the West Somerset district.

Members were given information on a rural broadband project called Connecting Devon and Somerset which would be rolled out over the next few years. The aim of the programme was to deliver superfast broadband to 90% of the community and business premises by December 2016, with 100% coverage anticipated by 2020. Currently the project was in a planning and surveying phase examining the existing infrastructure which would lead to a deployment plan and this would then determine how to approach each individual area.

A considerable concern for the Exmoor National Park Authority was that Exmoor would not receive 90% broadband coverage. The two primary business interests in the national park area were agriculture and tourism which as a result would be at a disadvantage. Members were advised of ways that the Authority was addressing the situation, which included looking at alternative solutions, e.g. wireless broadband.

Members questioned why should communities and businesses in certain rural wards be at a disadvantage compared with more of the urban district areas. In reply Matt Ballard advised that it would not be as cost efficient or feasible to start rolling out broadband in the more rural areas. During the discussion there was a request for more information relating to what the West Somerset percentage figure would be out of the overall 90% premises roll out figure; and what was the deadline for the next phase of funding bids to achieve 100% broadband coverage by 2020.

Following a recent business conference which had been attended by Members, it was pointed out that BT had confirmed that they would be putting West Somerset at the forefront of delivering superfast broadband which would be in place within three months of being notified of connection.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted and the presenters be thanked for their time

C19 **Chairman's Announcements**

20 May 2013	Attended the Pupil Parliament in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Williton
7 June 2013	Attended the Volunteer Awards in Minehead
13 June 2013	Attended the High Sheriff's Garden Party, Bath
15 June 2013	Attended the Somerset School Folk Dance Festival, Wells
24 June 2013	Hosted the Armed Forces Day service at West Somerset Council. The Chairman thanked all those who attended

The Vice-Chairman announced that he had attended the unveiling of the Commemorative Stone at the Watchet Town Council offices on 9 June 2013.

The Corporate Director advised of an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council to be held on Monday 22 July at 4.30pm, and of a Members Seminar to be held on 3 July 2013 at 2.30pm – further information on both meetings would follow in due course.

C20 **Notice on Motion**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 11 the following motion was received from Councillor K J Ross:

“West Somerset Council notes the request from 'Local Works' to consider submitting the following proposal to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act:

‘That the Secretary of State gives Local Authorities the power to introduce a local levy of 8.5% of the business rate on large retail outlets in their area with a rateable annual value not less than £500,000 and requires that the revenue from this levy be retained by the Local Authority in order to be used to improve local communities in their areas by promoting local economic activity, local services and facilities, social and community wellbeing and environmental protection.’

The Council notes that if this power was acquired it would present the opportunity to raise further revenue if the Council wished to use it at any point in the future.

The Council resolves to submit the proposal to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act and to work together with Local Works in order to gain support for the proposal from other councils in the region and across the country.”

Councillor K J Ross proposed the motion and it was seconded by Councillor I R Melhuish.

An amendment proposed by Councillor K M Mills and seconded by Councillor M O A Dewdney that the motion be referred back to the Corporate Policy Advisory Group for further discussion in order that Members could gain a better understanding of the proposal to support Local Works.

On being put to the vote the amendment was CARRIED.

This then became the new substantive motion there on which there was no further debate.

RESOLVED that the motion be referred back to the Corporate Policy Advisory Group for further discussion.

C21 **Core Members of Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs)**

It was announced that Councillor P N Grierson would become a core member of the Community and Customer PAG

RESOLVED that, for the 2013/14 municipal year, the core membership of Policy Advisory Groups (PAGs) be approved, as amended, as follows:

Housing, Health & Wellbeing

*Councillor K H Turner
Councillor D J Westcott
Councillor A M Chick
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor P N Grierson
Councillor L W Smith
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor E May

Environment

*Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
*Councillor C Morgan
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor P N Grierson
Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor J Freeman
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor E May
Councillor M A Smith
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor M O A Dewdney

Community and Customer

*Councillor D J Westcott
Councillor K H Turner
Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor K M Mills
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor L W Smith
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor E May
Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor P N Grierson

Regeneration & Economic Growth

*Councillor K M Mills
Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor S Y Goss
Councillor A M Chick
Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor K J Ross
Councillor E May
Councillor M A Smith
Councillor D D Ross

Performance & Corporate Support

*Councillor T Taylor
*Councillor S J Pugsley
*Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor J Freeman
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor D D Ross
Councillor P H Murphy

C22

Consultation Responses to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Strategy Paper on optimising the number and location of interim Intermediate Level Waste Storage facilities in England and Wales and Optimising the number and location of FED Treatment (Dissolution) Facilities in Magnox Limited

(Report No. WSC 73/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The report set out the Council's proposed response to the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA's) current consultation on Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) storage options for England and Wales which was launched on 10 May 2013 and closed on 30 June 2013. It also set out the Council's proposed response to the NDA's current consultation on optimising the number and location of Fuel Element Debris (FED) Treatment (Dissolution) Facilities in Magnox Limited which was also launched on 10 May 2013 and closed on 30 June 2013.

The Lead Member for Environment – Hinkley Point presented the report and stated that the transportation of nuclear waste products around the country filled him with dread and that importing radioactive waste from outside the area onto Hinkley Point A for storage and treatment was a step too far. There were public health and safety issues to take into consideration and the product was at risk of theft. ILW and FED were currently being kept safe and secure on sites where it was produced and if it were to be moved the likelihood of accidents and incidents would increase. There were also concerns relating to the increase of HGV traffic through Bridgwater and Cannington and that the construction of the waste storage building in four years' time would be right in the middle of the construction phase of the Hinkley Point C station. He concluded that it was totally unreasonable and unworkable to move waste from other sites onto Hinkley Point.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation in the report subject to an additional recommendation, to read:

“(f) That West Somerset Council urges the NDA to engage with the Council to help shape any future consultation process to ensure that the community are made aware and can actively engage with any emerging proposals regarding waste storage and/or treatment at Hinkley Point.”

The Planning Manager advised that he would be attending a workshop on the issue next month and would keep Members up to date, as necessary, on any emerging proposals.

Following concerns expressed, the Leader clarified the reasoning behind Cabinet's decision to refer the decision to Full Council.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor H J W Davies and seconded by Councillor K J Ross to replace 'England and/or Wales' in resolution 3.1 (a) and (b) with 'the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and/or foreign countries'.

On being put to the vote the amendments were CARRIED.

This then became part of the substantive motion on which there was no further debate.

RESOLVED that the Council responds to the NDA's consultations expressing the following points:

- (a) The West Somerset Council, in accordance with its planning guidance and given the potential adverse effects on the tourism economy, objects strongly to the principle of ILW and FED from other parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and/or foreign countries being stored and/or treated at Hinkley Point A or B (or C when it becomes operational).
- (b) That West Somerset Council objects to the increased risk to the Public of Individual Dose from the Transport of Radioactive Waste and the proposed treatment of FED at Hinkley Point A or B (or C when it becomes operational) from elsewhere in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and/or foreign countries.
- (c) That West Somerset Council requests that it is involved in all discussions and consulted at all stages of the development of the NDA's Strategy for ILW storage options for England and Wales and proposals relating to treating FED at Magnox sites.
- (d) That West Somerset Council raises considerable concerns with the NDA about the amount of time and limited scope of the consultations currently underway affecting the District of West Somerset.
- (e) That West Somerset Council, as host authority, expresses its disappointment at not having been made aware of the plans of the NDA at their commencement and the associated lack of engagement in the early part of the consultation process.
- (f) That West Somerset Council urges the NDA to engage with the Council to help shape any future consultation process to ensure that the community are made aware and can actively engage with any emerging proposals regarding waste storage and/or treatment at Hinkley Point.

Note: With the agreement of the Chairman this item was brought forward on the Agenda.

At this point the Chairman left the meeting and Councillor A F Knight chaired the remainder of the meeting.

C23

(A) Draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – Key Strategic Site Selection

(B) Draft West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 – New And Amended Policies in Response to the New Requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework

(Report Nos. WSC 51/13 and WSC 66/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of these two closely related reports was to amend the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032 Preferred Strategy in order to make it compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework, and to resolve to publish the revised Preferred Strategy for public consultation.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the reports separately and advised that he was confident that the areas identified for future development were sound. He encouraged Members that if they had comments to make they should submit them during the consultation period so as not to delay the process any further; and urged Ward Members to make their parish/town councils aware that the public consultation was taking place between 29 July and 22 September 2013.

Councillor K H Turner proposed the recommendation contained in report no. WSC 51/13 which was duly seconded by Councillor K J Ross.

RESOLVED that the draft Key Strategic Sites set out below (and in Appendices 2 and 3 to Report No. WSC 51/13) at Minehead, Watchet and Williton, based on the proportions of the overall development requirement for the Local Plan set out in paragraph 2.2 and Table 1 of the report, be published for public consultation:

Key strategic site A6 – Minehead
Key strategic site D1 – Watchet
Key strategic site D2 – Watchet
Key strategic site G1 – Williton
Key strategic site G2 – Williton
Key strategic site H1a – Williton

And longer term key strategic sites as follows:

Longer term key strategic site A5 – Minehead
Longer term key strategic site D3 – Watchet

Councillor K H Turner proposed the recommendation contained in report no. WSC 66/13 which was duly seconded by Councillor E May.

RESOLVED that the proposed, amended and additional West Somerset District Local Plan to 2032 Preferred Strategy policies, set out in Appendix 1 to Report No. WSC 66/13, be published for public consultation. The policies complement the draft Key Strategic Sites which will form an integral part of the supplementary consultation.

C24 **Local Plan to 2032 Delivery Timetable Review**

(Report No. WSC 52/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to bring into operation an updated local development scheme.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report and proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor A F Knight.

RESOLVED that the replacement Local Development Scheme, attached at Appendix 1 to Report No. WSC 52/13, be brought into operation with immediate effect.

C25 **Non-Domestic Rates – Section 49 Hardship Relief Policy**

(Report No. WSC 74/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to update the Council's current policy for the granting of relief from the payment of business rates under Section 49 of the Local Government Act 1988.

The Chief Executive presented the report and emphasised that the scheme was specifically intended for short-term temporary help for businesses experiencing hardship. He drew Members' attention to the key enhancements in the proposed new scheme and confirmed that there was no contingency within the approved budget to award hardship relief and it would be claimed as and when a business could prove real hardship.

Councillor M O A Dewdney proposed the recommendations in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor D J Westcott.

In reply to a question as to whether Cabinet would make their decision to grant hardship relief in private, out of the public domain, due to the need to consider financial information provided by a business which could be commercially sensitive, the Chief Executive confirmed that the intention would be for the Cabinet to be provided with sufficient information which would not contain commercially sensitive material to enable them to make a decision in public.

RESOLVED (1) that the details and procedures of the new scheme, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 and Appendix A of the report, be approved and adopted from 1 July 2013.

RESOLVED (2) that the Council's Financial Regulations and Constitution be updated to reflect the new governance arrangements.

C26 **Minutes and Notes for Information**

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

RESOLVED (1) that the draft notes of the Minehead Area Panel held on 12 June 2013, be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the draft notes of the Watchet, Williton and Quantocks Area Panel held on 11 June 2013, be noted.

RESOLVED (3) that the draft notes of the Dunster Area Panel held on 15 April 2013, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm.