

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2016

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor M Chilcott Deputy Leader

Councillor M Dewdney
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor K Turner

Members in Attendance:

Councillor I Aldridge
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor N Thwaites

Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor R Woods

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations/Section 151 Officer (S Adams)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Finance Manager (S Plenty)
Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager (P Harding)
CIM Fund Manager (L Redston)
Housing & Community Project Lead (A Summers)
Housing and Community Project Officer (C Gale)
Parking and Community Safety Manager (T Biss)
Media and Communications Officer (D Rundle)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

CAB97 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Mills, C Morgan, S Pugsley and A Trollope-Bellew.

CAB98 Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 February 2016

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 3 February 2016 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that, subject to amending 'The Lead Member proposed....' to 'The Leader proposed...' within Minute Nos. CAB95 and CAB96, the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 3 February 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB99 **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
Councillor K Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Councillor D Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Councillor I Aldridge	All	Williton	Spoke
Councillor P Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke
Councillor N Thwaites	All	Dulverton	Spoke

CAB100 **Public Participation**

Agenda Item 8 – HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of CIM Funding

Molly Quint, Joint Chair of Watchet Arts Group, spoke of the Group's disappointment at the POB's recommendation to refuse their application, but was pleased and grateful for their kind comments and understood the Board's concerns that the project was not value for money. Members were informed that Watchet Arts Group had now engaged a well-known Watchet artist and Mrs Quint hoped that a future submission for the Watchet Industrial Heritage Murals would be more successful.

CAB101 **Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Forward Plan for the month of April 2016 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the Forward Plan. It was noted that the following reports would be deferred due to the extension of the date for public consultation: (i) Closure and Disposal of Blue Anchor Public Conveniences; and (ii) Disposal of Church Street Public Conveniences, Dunster.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan for the month of April 2016, as amended, be approved.

CAB9102 **Quarter 3 2015/16 Performance**

(Report No. WSC 21/16 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with key performance management data up to the end of quarter 3 2015/16, to assist in monitoring the Council's performance.

In the absence of the Leader of Council, the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report, advising that out of the 62 measures reported on, only 2 were identified as red and not achieving their targets. He then went on to provide further detail concerning these measures. The Lead Member articulated particular concerns regarding the status of the Housing Enabling Schemes project within the Energy Infrastructure Programme highlight summary and hoped that the issue would improve by the filling of the Housing Implementation Officer post which had been vacant for some time.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

The Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager informed Members that full statistical information on staff sickness based on actuals at year end (after Quarter 4) would be provided, to include comparative information for other districts and a similar organisation; as well as setting the context of the Council's workforce and staff demographic. He confirmed that the Council had strict sickness policies and procedures in place.

Reference was made to what was the correlation between the fact that there were fewer number of households making homeless applications but there was a projected overspend relating to bed and breakfast temporary homeless accommodation costs (as detailed in Report no. WSC 29/16, Agenda Item 7), and the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing explained it was because the Council now rented less homes from private landlords for homeless families and bed and breakfast accommodation was being used more in the short-term.

RESOLVED that the Council's performance be noted.

CAB103 Financial Monitoring – Quarter 3 2015/16

(Report No. WSC 29/16 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the projected outturn financial position of the Council for the financial year 2015/16 (as at 31 December 2015).

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and outlined the contents of the report, advising that the report provided an indication of the forecast outturn for the year and any significant variances to the budget.

The Finance Manager provided Members with an update on figures pertaining to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve. The Lead Member pointed out that the biggest financial risk facing the Council at the moment was around the business rate reviews and appeals. There was a rateable value of about £14 million worth of appeals still outstanding, the consequence of which was still unknown.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

In response to a question, the Finance Manager explained how the Council was managing the Hinkley Point B refund.

In response to a further question, the Director of Operations/Section 151 Officer confirmed that the increase in the recommended minimum level of General Reserves (£600,000) came into force immediately following full Council's decision at its meeting held on 24 February 2016.

The Director of Operations/Section 151 Officer agreed to produce a summary paper with key figures on what level of appeals had been lodged and if enough interest was expressed the briefing session on business rate retention would be re-run to fully inform Members on the subject. She clarified that the business rates smoothing reserve dealt with the risk of the Council not achieving the level of business rate that was being budgeted for and therefore not connected with the level of appeals.

A query was raised relating to the earmarked reserve account for District Elections as it indicated that it had not been spent despite there being an election in 2015, and the Assistant Chief Executive agreed to investigate the matter and report back.

RESOLVED (1) that the Council's financial performance as at the end of Quarter 3 with the estimated position at the end of the financial year be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to transfer £50,000 of the predicted underspend to the Business Rates Smoothing Reserve.

RESOLVED (3) that it be recommended to Council to transfer £50,000 of the projected underspend to the Sustainability Reserve.

CAB104 HPC Planning Obligations Board – Allocation of CIM Funding

(Report No. WSC 28/16 - circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board, for the allocation of monies from the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and provided Members with the background information relating to the two applications submitted for consideration by the HPC Planning Obligations Board (POB) for CIM funding.

She pointed out that the Watchet Arts Group would have a second opportunity to resubmit a revised application, with the assistance of the CIM Fund Manager and having taken on board the POB comments; and during the debate it was hoped that this would be successful as it very important to Watchet community that the project moved forward.

On consideration of the application from Otterhampton Parish Council, both the Lead Member and the CIM Fund Manager explained how the different 'pots' of CIM funding worked and advised that this project would be funded from the 1st Annual CIM Fund payment which was a Somerset-wide pot.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor K Turner.

RESOLVED (1) that the recommendations of the Hinkley C Planning Obligations Board be endorsed, as follows:

- (i) That the application for £19,850 from Watchet Arts Group should be refused on the basis that it did not sufficiently meet the value for money criteria.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to endorse the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board for projects applying for over £25,000, as follows:

- (i) To release £37,820 from the CIM Fund 1st Annual Payment to Otterhampton Parish Council for the Recreation Ground Enhancement Project.

CAB105 Corporate Equality Objectives 2016 – 2019

(Report No. WSC 31/16 - circulated prior to the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to present to Cabinet the Corporate Equality Objectives 2016 - 2019 which set the council's aims on how to meet its statutory duties with regard to the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty 2011 toward its service users, members and employees; and to promote equality and eliminate all forms of direct and indirect discrimination.

The Lead Member for Customer and Community presented the report and advised that WSC was required by statute to review and establish organisational equality objectives. The Council's existing objectives were due to end in April 2016 and as there was a requirement to update these every four years, a refreshed set of objectives were proposed for approval and endorsement. He informed that the objectives aimed to improve the lives for the residents in West Somerset, and also supported the Council's legal requirements identified through the Equality Act 2010 and our public sector equality duty 2011.

The Lead Member further advised that the report had been presented to the Community PAG for discussion, where it was suggested to include the addition of rurality and low income characteristics in the Corporate Equality Objectives, and therefore it was agreed to amend the last sentence in paragraph 4.2 of the report to read:

“The Corporate Equality Objectives will also consider issues specific to rurality, low incomes, carers and military personnel and their families.”

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report, as amended, which were seconded by Councillor K Turner.

RESOLVED (1) that the Corporate Equality Objectives 2016-2019, as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report; the Action Plan, as attached at Appendix A to the report; and the Interpreting and Translation Policy, as attached at Appendix B to the report, be endorsed.

RESOLVED (2) that the British Sign Language Charter for Somerset, as attached at Appendix C to the report, be noted.

RESOLVED (3) that the Corporate Equality Objectives would also consider issues specific to rurality, low incomes, carers and military personnel and their families.

CAB106 Dulverton Off-Street Parking Fees and Charges

(Report No. WSC 19/16 - circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to set out proposals to be considered for the increase in off-street parking fees and permits for WSC car parks located within Dulverton as requested by Dulverton Town Council in the support of traffic management of tourist industry by seeking to influence driver behaviour with the following outcomes:

- Provision of additional short stay parking bays for tourist
- Continue investment in parking assets.

The report also identified the ongoing investment needs to improve the assets, the customers experience and convenience.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth, the Lead Member for Environment introduced the item and highlighted the key points from the report. He went on to propose the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor K Turner.

In response to a question as to what criteria had been used to set the car park charges, the Parking and Community Safety Manager advised that the tariffs were set at the request of Dulverton Town Council as stipulated in the current licence and management agreement between WSC and the Town Council.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council to approve an increase in off-street parking fees.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to approve an increase to six months and yearly permits.

CAB107 Tarr Steps Off-Street Parking Fees and Charges

(Report No. WSC 20/16 - circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to set out a proposal to be considered for the increase in off-street parking fees and charges for Tarr Steps car park as requested by Exmoor National Park to support continued investment in the parking asset.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth, the Lead Member for Environment introduced the item and provided background information. He went on to propose the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor M Chilcott.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve to increase the Tarr Steps car park tariff as requested by Exmoor National Park.

The meeting closed at 6.17 pm.