

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 MAY 2012

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor T Taylor Leader

Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor K H Turner

Councillor C Morgan
Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor D J Westcott

Members in Attendance:

Councillor A M Chick
Councillor H J W Davies
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor E May
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor L W Smith
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor K J Ross
Councillor M A Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (A Dyer)
Corporate Director (B Lang)
Group Manager – Finance and Central Support (G Carne)
Group Manager – Housing and Community (I Timms)
Group Manager – Environment and Services (Steve Watts)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

CAB130 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

CAB131 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 April 2012

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 April 2012 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB132 **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 P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke
Councillor K J Ross	All	Dulverton	Spoke
Councillor L W Smith	All	Minehead	Spoke
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	All	Crowcombe and Stogumber	Spoke

In addition,

- Councillor M A Smith declared a personal interest relating to Item 10 – Hinkley Point C New Staff Arrangements Update, as her sister was press officer for Stop Hinkley.

CAB133 **Public Participation**

No member of the public had requested to speak.

CAB134 **Forward Plan**

The purpose of this item was to approve Forward Plan No. 12 – June 2012 to June 2013.

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, Forward Plan No. 12 – June 2012 to June 2013 be approved:

(1) Goviers Lane Crossing – seaward side disabled access be moved from May to July 2012.

CAB135 **Cabinet Action Plan**

(Copy of the Action Plan – circulated with the Agenda.)

The Lead Member for Environment updated Members on the actions relating to Minute No. CAB126 Continuing Maintenance of Somerset County Council (SCC) Owned Land and advised that SCC and sponsors of the roundabouts had been informed of Cabinet's decision to cease grounds maintenance on SCC owned land. He also advised that SCC were responsible for the streams and leats in Staunton Lane, Minehead.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer gave an update on the actions relating to Minute No. CAB128 Localising Support for Council

Tax Benefit – Consideration of a joint policy for Somerset and advised that a report on Universal Credit and the joint policy for Council Tax Benefit would be presented to Members at a Community PAG meeting to be held on 28 May 2012 at 2.30 pm. With regards to the second homes council tax discount he informed that central government guidance stated that the minimum discount was 10% and no decision had been taken to reduce the amount.

RESOLVED that the following items be deleted as actioned:

- (i) CAB126 – Continuing Maintenance of Somerset County Council Owned Land.
- (ii) CAB128 – Localising Support for Council Tax Benefit – Consideration of a joint policy for Somerset.

CAB136 Budget Strategy 2012-14

(Report No. WSC 70/12, circulated with the Agenda and an amended Appendix A circulated at the meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to advise Members of the progress to date in formulating a new budget strategy to succeed the current strategy.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and advised that the budget strategy was discussed in detail at a recent Members Seminar and since then no further significant changes had been made to the strategy apart from a slight amendment to the flowchart which detailed the budget timescales.

She advised Members that the estimated current budget gap was £1.196 million, assuming that the 2012/13 savings target was achieved, and that the budget strategy set out how the Council would address this gap. She drew Members attention to the fundamental principles contained in the report and to the three options available to tackle the budget gap – an increase in government funding, an increase in council tax revenue and cuts to services – the best outcome being a combination of these three options. The Lead Member also made reference to the three budgets – theoretical, preferred and alternative, and asked Members to bear in mind that there would be significant resource implications associated in drafting these budgets, in addition to the work involved in identifying merger models and decommissioning.

The Lead Member advised Members that seminars regarding the budget strategy would continue and reports would be presented throughout the year, the first report would be on the outcome of the theoretical budget.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report and these were duly seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

Members discussed the costs associated with the council tax increase referendum, rebilling and any challenge to the referendum.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive for the huge amount of work involved in preparing the budget strategy report.

RESOLVED (1) that the Budget Strategy 2012-14 as stated in paragraph 4.2 of the report and supplemented by Appendix A of the report as amended, be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that a further report on the resource implications of implementing the strategy be presented to Council.

CAB137 Corporate Asset Management Plan 2012-2015

(Report No. WSC 74/12, circulated with the Agenda and a revised version of the report circulated at the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to consider the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2012-2015.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support who verbally reported on the figures in the risk matrix which had been omitted from the report, and advised of changes to the report and recommendations which involved deleting all reference to the Corporate Asset Transfer Plan. It was agreed that recommendation 2.1 (b) of the report be deferred for future consideration.

The Lead Member reported that due to a number of financial and legislative changes an update to the existing plan was necessary and the document contained the Council's current asset management position and provided a framework for planning in the short/medium term. She pointed out that the Corporate Property Officer which was referred to in Part Two of the plan was the, Group Manager - Finance and Central Support. She advised on major improvements that had been made to the proper assessment of the Council's estates in order to identify any urgent and necessary repairs and maintenance.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations as amended which were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

During the debate the following main issues were raised:

- Base costings of the assets were obtained from the District Valuer.
- The Asset Transfer Plan would make it easier and transparent for communities to buy assets and the net book value figure would not be the value at which organisations could reasonably bid for assets.
- An explanation as to why there was no asset value figure against Watchet Marina in Appendix C of the report would be given at the next Cabinet meeting.
- A request was made to add 'and Weir' against Dulverton Mill Leat in Appendix A of the report due to changes in the current situation, and

a meeting between a Dulverton Ward Member and the Lead Member for Environment to discuss the issue surrounding the works to the weir and the lead wall would be arranged before the next Cabinet meeting.

- Capacity issues were a major factor when dealing with complicated sales.

RESOLVED (1) that the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2012-2015 (Part One) be noted and approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2012-2015 (Part Two) be noted and approved.

CAB138 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item CAB139 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during that item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

The item contained information that could release confidential information relating to individuals. It was therefore agreed that, after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

CAB139 Hinkley Point 'C' – New Staff Arrangements Update

(Report No. WSC 69/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval for the funding of a one-off payment to a member of staff in recognition of exceptional work carried out over the past eighteen months. It also provided Cabinet with an update on the current position concerning staffing issues in relation to the Council's responsibility for discharging its duties associated with the site preparatory works for the possible construction of Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station.

The Leader outlined the details in the report and confirmed that the figure to be released from the Hinkley Point C preliminary site works Section 106 monies to a member of staff would total £6,482 as the figure quoted in the report excluded employers pension and National Insurance contributions.

The Leader proposed the recommendations in the report, subject to replacing the word 'purpose' for 'reasons' and amending the figure from £5,236 to £6,482 in recommendation 2.2 of the report, and these were duly seconded by Councillor K V Kravis.

RESOLVED (1) that the current position regarding the recruitment process be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that in accordance with financial regulations and for the reasons outlined in paragraph 4.5 of the report, the release of £6,482 from the Hinkley Point C preliminary site works Section 106 Agreement be approved.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm