

**CABINET**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2011**

**AT 4.30 PM**

**IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON**

**Present:**

Councillor T Taylor	.....	Leader
Councillor K V Kravis		Councillor C Morgan
Councillor S J Pugsley		Councillor D J Sanders
Councillor K H Turner		Councillor D J Westcott

**Members in Attendance:**

Councillor H J W Davies	Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor B Heywood	Councillor A F Knight
Councillor R P Lillis	Councillor E May
Councillor P H Murphy	Councillor D D Ross
Councillor K J Ross	Councillor M A Smith
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew	

**Officers in Attendance:**

Chief Executive (A Dyer)  
Corporate Director (B Lang)  
HR Consultant (M Griffin)  
Group Manager Housing and Community (I Timms)  
Group Manager Finance and Central Support (G Carne)  
Principal Planning Officer, LDF (M Wilsher) (Item 13)  
Principal Planning Officer, LDF (T Clempson) (Item 13)  
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

**CAB58      Apologies for Absence**

No apologies for absence were received.

**CAB59      Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2011**

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 October 2011 –  
circulated with the Agenda).

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5  
October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

**CAB60**      **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>
Councillor K J Ross	All	Dulverton	
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 A H Trollope-Bellew	All	Crowcombe	Spoke

**CAB61**      **Public Participation**

No member of the public had requested to speak.

**CAB62**      **Forward Plan**

The purpose of this item was to approve Forward Plan No. 6 – December 2011 to December 2012.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the following amendments, Forward Plan No. 6 – December 2011 to December 2012, be approved.

- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy be deleted.
- Best Value Budget Report be deleted.
- Civil Parking Enforcement – Final Report be removed from December.
- Report on the proposed lease with Somerset County Council as part of West Somerset House office integration to be inserted for December.
- Fees and Charges report to be inserted for December.
- Update report on the latest position regarding the Minehead Visitor Information and Interpretation Centre to be inserted for December.
- Report on the Hinkley Point development and an update on the Section 106 Agreement to be inserted for December.
- Refreshed draft Sustainable Community Strategy to be moved from December to January.
- Proposed localisation of Council Tax Benefit to be inserted for January.

It was noted that the Local Strategic Partnership had recently been disbanded and that a meeting between West Somerset Council and strategic partners had been scheduled for 8 December 2011 to discuss key objectives and ways of delivering the community strategy.

Clarification was sought as to when Cabinet would make a decision on the disabled access at Goviers Lane Crossing in Watchet. The Chief Executive confirmed that it was West Somerset Council's responsibility

to amend the access on the seaward side of the crossing and West Somerset Railway (WSR) was responsible for the crossing itself, and it was envisaged that one scheme would be jointly undertaken following consultation undertaken by WSR. It was requested that Watchet ward members should be kept informed of the latest developments.

**CAB63**      **Cabinet Action Plan**

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

**RESOLVED** that CAB57 – Hinkley Point C Project Joint Supplementary Planning Document be deleted as actioned.

**CAB64**      **Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – Employers Discretions**

(Report No. WSC 99/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to allow Cabinet the opportunity to consider the Written Statement on LGPS Employers Discretions and Key Pension Policy and recommend their approval to Council.

The HR Consultant outlined the details in the report and he advised that Unison had been consulted on the proposals and were content with the report and had no comments to make.

Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendation in the report and it was seconded by Councillor D J Westcott.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Council the approval of the Written Statement on LGPS Employers Discretions and Key Pension Policy, attached as Appendix B to the report, as well as the proposed policy amendments as set out in Appendix A to the report.

**CAB65**      **Equal Opportunities Policy – Employment and Service Delivery**

(Report No. WSC 111/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to allow Cabinet the opportunity to consider the revised Equal Opportunities Policy.

The HR Consultant outlined the details in the report and advised that the policy was written in consultation with the Council's Scrutiny and Performance Officer and that Unison were happy with the content.

In relation to the resolution made by Scrutiny there was discussion on what members should do in situations where they were representing the authority on an outside body and it was felt that the values as expressed in the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy were not being met. The HR Consultant was asked to consider this and prepare for Council, appropriate wording which would assist Councillors in handling such situations.

**RESOLVED (1)** that the Equal Opportunities Policy for Council be amended to reflect the concerns raised by Members when representing the Council on an outside body.

**RESOLVED (2)** that Cabinet recommends the Equal Opportunities Policy to Council for approval, subject to the amendment as detailed in resolution (1).

**CAB66      Annual Governance Report and Action Plan**

(Report No. WSC 139/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to report to Cabinet on the proposed actions to address recommendations in the Annual Governance Report (issued by the Audit Commission) and the Council's Annual Governance Statement (prepared by the Council) and the monitoring processes (appropriate work and service plans).

The report was presented by the Resources and Central Support Lead Member who advised that the main concern expressed by the Audit Commission was in relation to capacity issues surrounding the closedown of the accounts. The deadline had not been met this year and the Lead Member highlighted two recommendations in the Action Plan which would help to prevent the situation from occurring next year.

Thanks were expressed to the Group Manager Finance and Central Support and the Finance Team for the work undertaken in producing the accounts.

Councillor K Kravis proposed the recommendation in the report and it was seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agree to the proposed monitoring of all actions in the service plans and work plans as identified in Appendices A and B to the report.

**CAB67      Use of Licensing Panels – Taxis and Other Matters**

(Report No. WSC 108/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to outline a potential new approach to dealing with the majority of taxi licensing matters and a range of other licensing decisions.

The report was presented by the Housing, Environmental Health and Licensing Lead Member who advised that the use of Licensing Panels had been successful and had worked very well in the past. He commended the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor H J W Davies, on his commitment to undertake extra licensing training.

During the discussion it was recommended, for practical reasons and in order for the Panel to operate effectively, to include one reserve to the

proposed composition of three members on the Licensing Panel. It was advised that other local authorities had taken the same approach. In view of this the recommendation in the report was changed to take account of this change in composition.

**RESOLVED (1)** that Cabinet recommends to Council the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation, subject to the inclusion of one reserve to the Licensing Panel composition.

**RESOLVED (2)** that Cabinet recommends to Council that these provisions operate from 1 December 2011.

**CAB68**      **Corporate Strategy and Priorities 2012-16**

(Report No. WSC 117/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval of a framework, including priorities, that will form the basis of the Corporate Strategy 2012 to 2016.

The report was presented by the Leader of Council who briefed Members on the framework of the Corporate Strategy.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support proposed to add a second objective to the Resources – Achieving financial sustainability priority, to read “The management of efficient and cost effective resources”. This was to ensure that careful consideration would be given to the resource implications arising from the implementation of a number of issues being introduced in 2013, namely the retention of business rates; the localisation of the council tax benefit scheme; the impact of universal credit, and introduction of the Localism Bill.

Following concern raised regarding the lack of clarity of the first operating principle, a further amendment was proposed by the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support to amend the wording to read “Championing people and communities in West Somerset”. Both amendments were duly seconded by the Leader and on being put to the vote, were agreed.

**RESOLVED (1)** that Council be recommended to approve the strategic long-term vision for the Council as detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED (2)** that Cabinet recommends to Council the refreshed corporate priorities and objectives, subject to the amendments set out above, and subsequent reflection in a redrafted Corporate Strategy 2012-2016.

**CAB69**      **Somerset Electoral Review**

(Report No. WSC 138/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to advise Cabinet of the current position and recommendations in relation to the Somerset Electoral Review and

to provide an opportunity to make any representations during the current consultation stage.

The report was presented by the Executive Support and Democracy Lead Member who briefed Members on the County Council's proposals for the design of the four county electoral divisions in the West Somerset district area. Members welcomed the fact that the district would retain four County Councillors but expressed concern about whether there would be adequate County Councillor representation in the rural areas given the fact that it was proposed to increase the district ward size and still retain only one County Councillor to administer the area, and the lessening of community cohesion resulting from splitting the Alcombe and Minehead wards.

**RESOLVED** that the Boundary Commission for England be advised that Cabinet accept the current proposals put forward by Somerset County Council for reorganising the electoral divisions, although it would like to register its concern over the increase in size of the Dulverton and Exmoor division and the lessening of community cohesion resulting from splitting the Alcombe and Minehead wards, but believes the proposals are the best that can be achieved in the circumstances.

**CAB70**

**Draft West Somerset Local Plan Preferred Strategy**

(Report No. WSC 137/11, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to facilitate the publication of the Draft West Somerset Local Plan Preferred Strategy for public consultation. Responses to this public and stakeholder engagement exercise will be used to help with the preparation of a sound Local Plan for formal submission to the Secretary of State for examination.

The report was presented by the Housing, Environmental Health and Licensing Lead Member who informed that as Chairman of the Local Development Panel, he very much appreciated the increase in attendance by Members to the recent Panel meetings and he hoped that they would continue to attend in the future. He reminded Members that the draft West Somerset Local Plan Preferred Strategy was a consultation document and no final decision had been made as it had yet to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

The main points of the discussion were as follows:

- Suggestions would be proposed via the consultation process on how areas could be changed in the next 20 years and therefore it was inevitable that development boundaries would be increased to encompass green land.
- The consultation exercise should not be delayed, and once the development sites had been consulted on, the Council could make considerations on the size and types of houses being built in West Somerset.
- There should be more emphasis on the consultation process, asking such questions as: Does the document represent and fairly reflect

the feedback received so far? Where would it go out to consultation and would it capture the public opinion fairly and equally? When received, how will the Local Development Panel and Council make sure that the final document fairly reflects the views that have been submitted?

- An amendment to the wording on page 7 contained in the West Somerset spatial portrait paragraph relating to 'poor highway network' was recommended, and it was agreed that "suffers from" should be replaced with "has".

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support, on behalf of Cabinet, expressed her thanks and appreciation for the hard work the Council officers and the Chairman of the Local Development Panel had undertaken to raise the profile and produce the document for publication.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Council that, subject to a textual amendment set out above, the Draft West Somerset Local Plan: Preferred Strategy, be published for public consultation.

The meeting closed at 6.33 pm.