

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2014

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor T Taylor Leader

Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor C Morgan
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor K M Mills
Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor K H Turner

Members in Attendance:

Councillor M J Chilcott
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor D J Sanders

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor E May
Councillor K J Ross
Councillor M A Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (P James)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Assistant Director – Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager (P Harding)
New Nuclear Programme Manager (A Goodchild)
Major Projects Manager (J Holbrook)
Assistant Director – Planning and Environment (T Burton)
Assistant Director – Operational Delivery (C Hall)
Finance Manager (S Plenty)
Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development (S Lewis)
Housing & Community Project Lead (A Summers)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

CAB30 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

CAB31 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 August 2014

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 6 August 2014 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 6 August 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB32 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 H Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Councillor D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Councillor P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke
Councillor K J Ross	All	Dulverton	Spoke

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew	CAB38	Supplies water to Crowcombe Church House	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K J Ross	CAB39	Wife works for Engage	Personal	Spoke
Cllr K V Kravis	CAB40	Association with owners of the Blue Anchor Hotel	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber

CAB33 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak.

CAB34 Forward Plan

(Copy of latest Forward Plan published 15 August 2014 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the latest Forward Plan published 15 August 2014.

RESOLVED that the latest Forward Plan published 15 August 2014 be approved.

CAB35 Cabinet Action Plan

There were no resolutions/recommendations from the meeting held on 6 August 2014 that required monitoring.

CAB36 Corporate Performance Quarter 1

(Report No. WSC 118/14 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering the corporate priorities and the performance of council services for the period 1 April 2014 to 30 June 2014. The report

also provided an overview of the outcome of the Council satisfaction survey.

The Leader of Council presented the item, providing details and an explanation on the new way of reporting performance monitoring. The changes included: performance reports would only be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in quarters 2 and 4 prior to being presented to Cabinet; service indicators would be presented based upon the new Joint Management Team structure, and the measure of staff sickness absence had been dropped as all staff were now employed by Taunton Deane Borough Council. He then summarised the coloured status for each performance indicator headline. The Leader recognised that particular concerns had been expressed regarding planning applications and gave reassurance that whilst the Planning department was in the process of being restructured the issue was being looked at very carefully in order to maintain the high standards that had been attained previously. The Leader further advised that the annual satisfaction survey responses reflected very well on West Somerset Council.

The Leader proposed the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

The Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager advised that although the indicators currently provided were not indicative of how performance would progress throughout the year, and in light of the changes to staffing, performance was holding up very well and was looking encouraging. He reassured Members that the monitoring of staff sickness was a key indicator and would continue to be rigorously monitored as part of the JMASS project.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- In response to a suggestion that it would be useful to obtain comparison figures with other local authorities for satisfaction relating to the way in which councils ran their services and provided value of money, the Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager agreed to investigate and report back if information was available. He advised that as part of a national initiative, whereby a standard questionnaire would be issued by all local authorities, benchmarking against other authorities would be possible in the future.
- Clarity was provided on Priority 2 Key Task 3.4 and Cabinet was informed that an update report would be presented in October as regards a feasibility study relating to how best to spend the leisure funding.
- Concerns were raised regarding the performance of planning.
- Members underlined the importance of being kept informed of staff sickness absence and both the Chief Executive and the Corporate Strategy and Performance Manager agreed that at Members' request sickness monitoring would be included for the next quarter, and that measures would be developed to report equally across both West Somerset and Taunton Deane councils.

In light of concerns raised, it was proposed and seconded that the measure of staff sickness absence be included in future corporate performance reports.

RESOLVED (1) that the progress in delivering the corporate priorities for 2014/15 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the measure of staff sickness absence would continue to be reported in future corporate performance reports.

CAB37 Financial Monitoring Quarter 1

(Report No. WSC 117/14 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide updated in year financial information on a range of issues including budgetary monitoring and business rate retention.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and reported on the underspend figure that would be transferred to the General Reserves and advised that officers were very keen to carry out further investigation on business rates exposure in order to come forward with recommendations. She went on to propose the recommendations which were duly seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

The Assistant Director – Resources responded to a series of questions and issues raised by Members relating to business rates.

Concern was raised regarding building control income from fees being significantly below budget and whether action was being taken to mitigate the problem. The Lead Member for Environment – General stated that a report would be presented in November on the proposals for a joint building control partnership.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support advised that a breakdown of costs relating to the public conveniences overspend would be reported in the next quarterly review.

RESOLVED (1) that the predicted financial position of the Council for 2014/15 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the transfer of £192,345 to the Business Rates Earmarked Reserves to protect against volatility and offset accounting timing differences in business rates retention funding be approved.

CAB38 Hinkley Point C Community Impact Mitigation Fund

(Report No. WSC 120/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board (which consists of EDF, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council and West Somerset Council) to Cabinet for final approval.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support. She provided background information on the Housing Fund and advised that proposals for the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund

were considered by the Planning Obligations Board using nine evaluation criteria. The Lead Member then went on to brief Members on the four applications received and confirmed that applicants could resubmit their application if the Board declined it for approval.

The recommendations contained within the report were duly proposed and seconded.

Members expressed support and agreed that the CIM fund would provide fantastic opportunities for the community.

In reply, the Lead Member confirmed that a summary of monies received, allocated to projects and released would be included in future reports in order to aid monitoring.

The Major Projects Manager advised that update reports would be provided to Cabinet and Council on a bi-monthly basis when applications on projects were received.

RESOLVED (1) that the recommendation of the Planning Obligations Board in relation to the draft Housing Strategy be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that it is recommended to Council to allow for the release of funds for two projects from the £3,500,000 that has been paid by EDF to West Somerset Council for the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund. This consists of:

- £90,373 for Stogursey Parish Council for the construction of new play area equipment at Burgage Road, Stogursey; and
- £250,000 for Wembdon Village Hall and Playing Fields Trust towards the construction of a new village hall and playing fields in Wembdon.

CAB39 Supporting Communities to make CIM Applications

(Report No. WSC 115/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval for the use of £10,000 of the Hinkley Earmarked Reserve to fund Engage West Somerset in supporting organisations to access the Community Impact Mitigation Fund relating to Hinkley Point C.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer presented the item and provided Members with the background information, highlighting that Engage would only work with organisations which had been forwarded on to them by West Somerset Council. He also reported that Engage's activity would be monitored every quarter by the Hinkley Policy Advisory Group.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report, and that amendments to the second and third recommendations be made so that they read as follows:

3.1 – 'that Cabinet approve the use of up to £10,000 of the Hinkley Holding Account to fund Engage West Somerset in supporting organisations in West Somerset to access the Community Impact Mitigation Fund relating to Hinkley Point C'; and

3.3 – ‘that the New Nuclear Programme Manager, the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager and the Housing & Community Project Lead will monitor the performance through the Hinkley PAG and the Lead Member for Communities on spend and feedback from Engage West Somerset’.

The recommendations and amendments were seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The proposal was seen as an investment and would ensure that the Council maximised the chances for organisations to obtain money from the CIM Fund and would also be the most cost effective way to get the best results for communities in West Somerset.
- Communication of the service to be provided by Engage was necessary as well as providing advice on how organisations submitted bids to access the CIM Fund.
- Clarification was provided that only projects within the West Somerset border would be supported and eligible to access the CIM Fund.

A further amendment to recommendation 3.1 was proposed by Councillor K V Kravis to include ‘in West Somerset’ after the word ‘organisations’, which was duly seconded.

RESOLVED (1) that the use of up to £10,000 of the Hinkley Holding Account to fund Engage West Somerset in supporting organisations in West Somerset to access the Community Impact Mitigation Fund relating to Hinkley Point C be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the New Nuclear Programme Manager, the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager and the Housing & Community Project Lead are collectively granted delegated authority to instruct Engage West Somerset to work with organisations who have submitted Expressions of Interest to assist them in making Full Applications.

RESOLVED (3) that the New Nuclear Programme Manager, the Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager and the Housing & Community Project Lead will monitor the performance through the Hinkley PAG and the Lead Member for Communities on spend and feedback from Engage West Somerset.

CAB40 Blue Anchor Coastal Protection Scheme

(Report No. WSC 119/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide an urgent update to Cabinet on the Blue Anchor coastal protection scheme and the options that now face this Council. The urgency is based around the Environment Agency’s inability to hold the allocated money against this project.

The Lead Member for Environment – General presented the report in detail and went on to thank the Assistant Director – Operational Delivery for producing the report at short notice. He emphasised that as this was a

WSC project, the Council ran the risk of having to meet any additional costs if the project went over budget, and he drew Members' attention to the number of options for consideration and the risks associated with each one.

The Assistant Director – Operational Delivery provided Members with an account of the report and the project's history, and advised that the Council had genuine support from the Environment Agency to improve the bid prior to a resubmission.

In response, an assurance was provided that the project would not be commissioned unless the Council was reasonably confident it could be completed. The Assistant Director provided details of the overall cost of the scheme and the Council's contribution, advising that the Environment Agency would only support the scheme and release their contribution to WSC after assessing a number of factors, one of which being whether it would financially stack up. He stressed that the bid would not be resubmitted without having assurance that the hotelier's contribution was secured.

It was requested that reference be made to borrowing funds in the report which was to be presented to full council within the paragraph that detailed funding choices.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report, with an amendment to the wording printed in recommendation 3.2 to include 'two or' after the word 'option'; and an additional recommendation to read: 'It is recommended that Council include £25,000 in the approved capital programme as a contribution towards this project, to be funded from revenue reserves as a supplementary estimate'. The recommendations and amendments were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

RESOLVED (1) that it is recommended to Council to consider progressing with option two as the most affordable option, and presents the least risk to this Authority.

RESOLVED (2) that it is recommended to Council that should members wish to progress with option two or three, West Somerset Council does not financially underwrite the longevity of any scheme in the form of a guarantee to the hotel owners.

RESOLVED (3) that it is recommended that Council include £25,000 in the approved capital programme as a contribution towards this project, to be funded from revenue reserves as a supplementary estimate.

The meeting closed at 6.15 pm