

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 APRIL 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 H J W Davies
Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor D D Ross

Councillor M O A Dewdney
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor E May
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor L W Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (A Dyer)
Corporate Director (B Lang)
Group Manager - Finance and Central Support (G Carne)
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)
Planning Manager (A Goodchild)
Media, PR and Communications Officer (S Beaumont)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

CAB117 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

CAB118 Minutes of the Meeting held on 7 March 2012

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 7 March 2012 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 7 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB119 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

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Councillor D J Sanders	CAB125	Into Somerset Board Member	Personal	Spoke and voted
Councillor K V Kravis	CAB127	Her business was close to the Regal Theatre and she opened before shows	Prejudicial	Left the chamber
Councillor I R Melhuish	CAB127	Council Representative on MATA Regal Theatre Co Ltd	Personal	Spoke
Councillor D D Ross	CAB127	Member of the Regal Theatre Board of Directors	Prejudicial	Left the chamber

CAB120 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak.

CAB121 Forward Plan

The purpose of this item was to approve Forward Plan No. 11 – May 2012 to May 2013.

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments, Forward Plan No. 11 – May 2012 to May 2013 be approved:

- (1) the Revised Budget Strategy 2013/14 be inserted for May 2012.

CAB122 Cabinet Action Plan

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

There were no resolutions/recommendations from the meeting held on 7 March 2012 that required monitoring.

CAB123 Allocation of Section 106 Funds held – Quarter 4

(Report No. WSC 60/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was make proposals for the allocation of monies secured through planning obligations to individual schemes, and to update members with the current funding position.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report and advised that no regular Section 106 Agreements had been committed this quarter as no proposals had been received. She reported that community groups and town/parish councils interested in applying for Section 106 monies had better access to information via the Council's internet and dates had been synchronised so that any expressions of interest received would fit in with the quarterly Cabinet meetings.

She confirmed that the release of £1,960 from the Phase 1 Hinkley Point Community Safety money to Sedgemoor District Council would be used to fund a feasibility study to look into the cleaning of streets in the area around the Hinkley Point development, including Cannington.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations in the report and these were duly seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

Members queried issues surrounding the release of funding to certain projects and it was also questioned whether the Section 106 money could be allocated to cover the cost of the grass cutting issue. The Lead Member clarified that there were stipulations as to what the Section 106 money could be spent on and that the spending had to be relevant and relate to the development. She advised that if Section 106 money was spent incorrectly the Council could run the risk of paying back the money to the developer. The Planning Manager advised that money accrued to date would be spent according to the legal agreement with the developer and would match the community's priorities as flexibly as possible.

The Lead Member drew Members attention to some good news relating to Section 106 monies and informed that EDF had recently presented a cheque for £1.6 million to the West Somerset Community College skills and training department.

RESOLVED (1) that the current funding position in respect of regular Section 106 agreements, as shown in Appendices A and B, attached to the report, be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the allocation of £1,960 of Phase 1 Hinkley Point monies, as described in 4.2.5 of the report attached to the agenda, be approved.

RESOLVED (3) that the current funding positioning in respect of the Hinkley Point Section 106 agreement, as shown in Appendix C attached to the agenda, be noted.

CAB124 Local Impact Report – Hinkley Point

(Report No. WSC 62/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide a brief summary of the key issues which have emerged from the preparation of the Local Impact Report (LIR). In accordance with the previous decision concerning the LIR, final approval of the draft LIR will be sought at a Special Council meeting to take place on 16 April 2012. This report provided Cabinet with up-to-date information concerning EDF Energy's Hinkley Point C proposals and their implications for the Council and the communities of West Somerset.

The report was presented by the Planning Manager who reported that a Corporate Working Group had recently been held where a number of Members were in attendance during which the draft LIR was considered in detail. He advised that the LIR was a joint document being prepared by West Somerset Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Somerset County Council, which was overseen by a Steering Group. The work carried out by working groups from the three authorities reflected the approach that had been outlined in the Hinkley Point C Supplementary Planning Document and tried to supplement what was known about the project with evidence and support from the local communities that had been collected over the last two to three years.

He informed Members that the IPC had changed its name to the National Infrastructure Directorate of the Planning Inspectorate (NID) and if written representations were not received by the dates specified in their timetable, the NID might disregard them. The Planning Manager advised that, therefore, it was absolutely essential that the Council submitted the LIR on 3 May 2012. Members were informed that an additional Corporate Working Group would be held on 26 April 2012 at 1.00pm where a further release of the LIR would be made available.

Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendations contained in the report, subject to the word 'draft' being replaced with 'emerging' in recommendations 2(i) and 2(ii), and these were seconded by Councillor K V Kravis.

Members of Cabinet thanked Andrew Goodchild and officers for the phenomenal amount of work undertaken in preparing the Local Impact Report.

RESOLVED (1) that the content of the emerging Local Impact Report (LIR), be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that Cabinet recommend to Council that the emerging LIR be approved and that Council delegate the finalisation and submission of the LIR to the Planning Manager in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Member of Environment and the Chief Executive on or before the IPC.NIC on 3 May 2012.

RESOLVED (3) that the latest position concerning the Hinkley Point C proposals set out in the report, attached to the agenda, be noted.

RESOLVED (4) that the arrangements being made to provide support to local communities in considering and responding to the Development Consent Order application, be noted.

CAB125 Into Somerset – Proposal for Future Delivery of Inward Investment

(Report No. WSC 59/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide more information about Into Somerset to allow Members to make an informed decision in relation to West Somerset's potential future involvement for a further three years.

The Lead Member for Economic Regeneration and Growth presented the report and drew Members' attention to the risks if West Somerset Council did not continue to support and join Into Somerset. The Lead Member proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor K V Kravis.

During the debate the following main points were raised:

- West Somerset businesses had benefited greatly from being a part of the Hinkley Point Supply Chain and the annual contribution to ensure that West Somerset continued to be involved in the supply chain offered exceedingly good value.
- Businesses would have found it a lot more difficult to access the Supply Chain portal, which was set up specifically for Somerset businesses, without this initiative.
- Vital to retain link with Into Somerset in light of the introduction of high speed broadband to rural areas of West Somerset, thereby attracting new business and encouraging inward investment.
- Although West Somerset did not have the same employment land opportunities as neighbouring authorities, the Council had collaborated with Sedgemoor District Council to produce a property and land database in order to facilitate and encourage businesses to relocate to the district.

- Members should consider the potential for investment in future years for West Somerset.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve entering into an agreement to continue its involvement with the Into Somerset Partnership for a further three years – 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15 – with an annual contribution of £3,000 to be included in the budget process, subject to

- the insertion of annual break clauses into the Partnership Agreement to allow Local Authorities to reassess their contribution, due to budget constraints; and
- a review after the first year of delivery (2012/13) to ensure that Into Somerset is effectively delivering against its business plan.

CAB126 Continuing Maintenance of Somerset County Council Owned Land

(Report No. WSC 24/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek member approval for the cessation of grounds maintenance operations undertaken by West Somerset Council (WSC) on behalf of and on land owned by Somerset County Council (SCC).

The Lead Member for Environment presented the report and highlighted that in paragraph 4.2.2 of the report, the cost of providing the service was £21,300, and not the figure as stated. He confirmed that there would be no redundancies and it was proposed that any loss of work would be redirected to enable the workforce to undertake other work.

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

Councillor K V Kravis briefed Members on discussions that had taken place with parish and town councils regarding the possibility that maintenance of Somerset County Council owned land might cease and it was hoped that discussions with Minehead Town Council would continue on issues relating to grounds maintenance in order to create efficiencies and develop joint cost savings.

The Lead Member informed that an email from Somerset County Council had been received confirming that there would not be any increases in the amenity, grass cutting and operational funding for the foreseeable future. Due to sponsorship money having already been spent on flowers and shrubs there would be limited maintenance of verges/roundabouts until October 2012. It was highlighted that this could lead to an opportunity for local people to take responsibility and care in their own community and that this should be encouraged. Members questioned whether the sponsors had been asked to increase their contribution to cover the full cost of the maintenance and in reply the Chief Executive confirmed that as yet they had not been approached but there was a proposal to do so.

Concern was raised about the possibility of flooding if the streams and leats in Staunton Lane, Minehead were not maintained and Members requested clarification as to who was responsible for the leats. Further concerns were expressed about SCC's discontinuation of weed spraying in the district.

RESOLVED (1) that West Somerset Council continues until 31 October 2012 to undertake limited maintenance of those areas of Somerset County Council (SCC) owned land as highlighted in table 1 of the report, and ceases with immediate effect to maintain all other areas of land owned by SCC as listed in Appendix A of the report.

RESOLVED (2) that in instances where the maintenance is sponsored the appropriate pro rata refunds are calculated and paid.

CAB127 **Request for Allocation of Seaside Strategy Funding to the Regal Theatre**

(Report No. WSC 58/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to consider a proposal from the Regal Theatre for the allocation and use of an element of the seaside strategy earmarked reserve funding for schemes in Minehead.

The report was presented by the Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth who proposed the recommendation in the report and this was seconded by Councillor D J Westcott. Councillor Westcott reminded Members that this project would benefit the whole of West Somerset, not just the residents of Minehead.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that up to £50,000 be allocated to the Regal Theatre to enable their capital building works (the Lift Project) to be completed.

CAB128 **Localising Support for Council Tax Benefit – Consideration of a joint policy for Somerset**

(Report No. WSC 49/12, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to authorise joint working with other Somerset authorities to seek to form an agreed policy across Somerset for a Council Tax Resolution Scheme to replace the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report who advised that West Somerset Council currently administers Housing and Council Tax Benefit. However, Universal Credit was being introduced by central government which would result in all benefits (including housing benefit) being paid as one monthly 'wage'. This would mean that housing benefit would no longer be a duty of West Somerset Council, however council tax benefit would still be retained but this would change to a 'discount'. The Council had to

design a new scheme with the other precepting authorities to administer the council tax discount taking into account a 10% reduction in government funding.

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

It was reported that West Somerset Council's role in administering Universal Credit was unknown at this stage, and it was confirmed that regular reports would be presented to Members as and when further information was received. To enable a better understanding, Members requested a clear explanation of central government's proposals.

In reply to a question as to whether council tax discount could be stopped for second home owners, the Chief Executive advised that there was still a requirement to apply the minimum discount available which was currently 10%. In reply to a further question as to whether the minimum discount could be reduced to 1%, the Leader advised that the information would be provided following the meeting.

RESOLVED (1) that the aim of agreeing a Somerset wide policy be agreed.

RESOLVED (2) that the aim of producing a policy limiting funding within the grant received by central government, i.e. one that is cost neutral to West Somerset's council tax payers, be approved.

CAB129 **Budget Strategy – Value for Money Approach and Strategy Refresh**

(Report No. WSC 49/12, with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval of a Value for Money Strategy.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the report who advised that the Value for Money Strategy was being refreshed in the light of changing financial circumstances and it combined the new budget strategy relating to benchmarking and the cost and performance of the Council's services against similar authorities.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation in the report which was seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

RESOLVED that the Value for Money Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm