

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 MARCH 2014

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor T Taylor Leader

Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor C Morgan
Councillor K H Turner

Councillor K M Mills
Councillor S J Pugsley
Councillor D J Westcott

Members in Attendance:

Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor A F Knight
Councillor K J Ross

Councillor B Heywood
Councillor E May

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)
Interim Executive Director (A Dyer)
Director of Growth and Development (B Cleere)
Assistant Director – Housing and Community Development (S Lewis)
Community Liaison and Climate Change Manager (A Lamplough)
Efficiencies and Performance Manager (K Batchelor)
Communications and Media Officer (D Rundle)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

Chris Edwards, Manager Quantock Hills AONB

CAB101 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew.

CAB102 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 February 2014

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 5 February 2014 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 5 February 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB103 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 K J Ross	All	Dulverton	Spoke

CAB104 Public Participation

Agenda Item 8 – Consideration of nominations received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation

Phil Gannon spoke on behalf of Old Cleeve Parish Council and as a resident of Washford in support of the nomination application to list the land next to the Quarry, Washford as an Asset of Community Value. He advised that the footpath, although it was not a dedicated footpath, had been used by the community for a considerable number of years. The parish council was willing to open up negotiations with West Somerset Council for an asset transfer for community use. He concluded that the area needed considerable maintenance and once this had been done, the site could be used to develop an arboretum/picnic area whilst maintaining links to the existing rights of way.

CAB105 Forward Plan

(Copy of latest Forward Plan published 20 February 2014 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the latest Forward Plan published 20 February 2014.

RESOLVED that the latest Forward Plan published 20 February 2014 be approved.

CAB106 Cabinet Action Plan

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

The Leader updated Members on the latest developments in connection with the Tobacco Declaration and on recent meetings held, advising that the item would be presented to full Council for approval within the wider context of health and wellbeing.

RESOLVED (1) that CAB89 – Tobacco Declaration be carried forward.

RESOLVED (2) that CAB97 – Annual Budget and Council Tax Setting 2014-15 be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (3) that CAB98 – Fees and Charges 2014/15 be deleted as action.

RESOLVED (4) that CAB99 – 2015/16 Council Tax Rebate Scheme Consultation be deleted as actioned.

CAB107 **Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (QHAONB) Management Plan 2014-19**

(Report No. WSC 35/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to enable Cabinet to consider the main aspects of the proposed Quantock Hills Management Plan.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Environment – General, the Leader introduced the item and welcomed Chris Edwards, Manager of the Quantock Hills AONB to the meeting. The Leader provided background information and explained that the reason for presenting the report was due to the Council having a statutory duty to comply with the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. He drew Members' attention to the Vision for the QHAONB and the nine themes, and informed that WSC contributed £9,957 to the service. However there was currently an issue with future funding provided by Somerset County Council.

The Leader proposed the recommendation contained in the report which was duly seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

Chris Edwards encouraged Members to view the full Management Plan which was available via the following website link http://www.quantockhills.com/news/article/quantock_hills_management_plan_2014-2019/ advising that he could provide a paper copy on request. He drew attention to the Statement of Significance which gave a better understanding of the QHAONB and highlighted those elements that made the area of national importance. He then read out the Purpose Statement for the Joint Advisory Committee which provided a summary of the Plan's aims and objectives.

Chris Edwards gave an update on funding stating that SCC was proposing to reduce its contribution to the AONB by 90% (a loss of £21,000) in the next financial year, and, subsequently, this would prevent QHAONB getting £60,000 from Defra. The funding received was used to employ a small team dedicated to attracting additional external funding and for developing projects. He thanked the Leader for contacting SCC in this regard to question whether this was an appropriate way forward.

Various questions and issues were raised by Members on matters such as swaling; increased levels of traffic on the Quantocks; promotion of the Quantocks through sponsorship; concerns surrounding funding cuts and how would the management plan be delivered as a result; and enquiring as to what the changes were between the previous Management Plan and the present one. WSC promised to keep pressure on SCC over their proposal to cut funding to the AONB.

RESOLVED that the Management Plan be endorsed as a cohesive means to safeguard the unique beauty and distinctive character of the Quantock Hills.

CAB108 **Consideration of nominations received under the Community Right to Bid Legislation**

(Report No. WSC 40/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to review a nomination received under the Localism Act 2011 Part 5 – The Community Right to Bid.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer presented the item and reported that the information submitted by Old Cleeve Parish Council was not considered to fulfil the definition as an asset of community value under section 88 of the legislation. He pointed out that the reason for recommending to reject the nomination for listing was that the informal use of the land meant that there could be no guarantee of its future use as a community facility. He went on to thank Old Cleeve Parish Council for their recent letter requesting that discussions be held with WSC about the future ownership of the land. The Lead Member advised that the matter would be discussed by the Asset Management Group who would contact the parish council as soon as a decision had been agreed upon.

He proposed the recommendation contained in the report, subject to the inclusion of a further recommendation that the issue of future ownership of the land next to the Quarry, Washford would be considered by the Asset Management Group. These were seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support confirmed that the matter would be discussed at a meeting of the Asset Management Group and expressed the need to formulate a strategy on community assets, for clarity and continuity purposes, which would give a basis to help make decisions in the future.

The Community Liaison and Climate Change Manager provided an explanation of the term ‘ancillary’ and ‘informal use’, advising that if there was a formal use then there would be a public right of way across the land in question which could, therefore, be considered as community use; as there was no recognised public right of way across it, the land had an informal use and could not be listed as an asset of community value.

RESOLVED (1) that the nomination [ACV027] for land next to the Quarry, Washford to be listed as an Asset of Community Value be rejected.

RESOLVED (2) that the issue of future ownership of the land next to the Quarry, Washford would be considered by the Asset Management Group.

CAB109 **Somerset Growth Plan**

(Report No. WSC 39/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to update Cabinet on progress in producing the Somerset Growth Plan and seek endorsement of the plan.

The Lead Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth presented the item and provided a comprehensive explanation as to the purpose and aims of the Somerset Growth Plan. She informed that it was a 'live', fully encompassing document and went on to propose the recommendation of the report which was duly seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

The Director of Growth and Development reiterated that the Growth Plan was a work in progress and would be reviewed and updated regularly.

In response to a question as to what aspects of the Growth Plan would benefit West Somerset, the Director of Growth and Development responded by stating that the Hinkley Point C development would provide the biggest opportunity for West Somerset.

Members highlighted further aspects of the document associated with West Somerset and asked detailed questions and requested further clarification on the dualling of A358 and A39, rural work hubs and sea defences in Minehead.

It was requested that a correction be made to the text in the first paragraph on page 5 of Appendix B to the Somerset Growth Plan where reference was made to West Somerset being "close to HPC", and that it should be amended to read "HPC is in West Somerset".

RESOLVED that the Somerset Growth Plan document, attached as appendix A to the report, be endorsed.

CAB110 Corporate Performance April – December 2013-14

(Report No. WSC 41/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on progress in delivering the corporate priorities, performance of council services covering the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013.

The Leader of Council presented the item and advised Members that the Scrutiny Committee had considered the report and their comments and resolutions were contained therein. He then proposed the recommendations in the report which were seconded by Councillor K M Mills.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing drew Members' attention to the key service indicators relating to Environmental Health and Licensing and advised that the environmental health officers had to cover the service due to long-term sickness and maternity leave during this period. On behalf of Cabinet, he commended the officers as they had worked extremely hard to continue to provide an efficient and effective service, and expressed his gratitude for their commitment in getting the service back on track.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing then went on to explain the reasons for reporting on Key Action 5.2.2 'Deliver 10 empty properties back into use within the Exmoor Panel area'. It was agreed that a briefing note would be circulated to all Members clarifying the definition of an empty property and how this related to the receipt of New Homes Bonus payments.

RESOLVED (1) that the process in delivering the corporate priorities for 2013/14 be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that the performance against the measures of success and key service indicators be noted.

CAB111 Financial Monitoring April – December 2013-14

(Report No. WSC 42/14, 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 report and advised that it was apparent that the position regarding the budget variances was slightly more complicated on this occasion due to the establishment of the new joint management structure and shared services between WSC and TDBC, and Hinkley staffing issues.

She proposed the recommendation in the report which was duly seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

In response to a question as to whether the sum for sandbag expenditure could be claimed back from Central Government, the Director of Operations indicated that officers were working on how much of the money could be reclaimed, and it was hoped that the vast majority would be refunded.

RESOLVED that the current financial standing of the Council together with the estimated position at the end of the financial year be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.03 pm