

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2014

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor T Taylor Leader

Councillor K M Mills

Councillor C Morgan

Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew

Councillor D J Westcott

Councillor S J Pugsley

Councillor K H Turner

Members in Attendance:

Councillor H J W Davies

Councillor A F Knight

Councillor E May

Councillor D D Ross

Councillor A P Hadley

Councillor R P Lillis

Councillor P H Murphy

Councillor M A Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Assistant Chief Executive (B Lang)

Director of Operations (S Adam)

Finance Manager (S Plenty)

New Nuclear Programme Manager (A Goodchild)

Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)

Revenues and Benefits Manager (H Tiso)

Performance and Development Manager (S Doyle)

Assistant Director – Housing and Communities (S Lewis)

Major Projects Manager (J Holbrook)

CIM Fund Manager (L Redston)

Media and Communications Officer (D Rundle)

Housing Initiatives Implementation Officer (A Devine)

Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

Dave Baxter, Sedgemoor District Council

CAB51 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor K V Kravis.

CAB52 Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 October 2014

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 1 October 2014 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 1 October 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB53 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 H J W Davies	All	SCC	Spoke

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr A H Trollope-Bellew	CAB64	Private landlord	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber
Cllr K H Turner	CAB64	Private landlord	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber
Cllr D J Westcott	CAB64	Private landlord	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber
Cllr S J Pugsley	CAB64	Private landlord	Prejudicial	Left the Chamber
Cllr D Ross	CAB64	Landlord	Personal	Spoke

CAB54 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak.

CAB55 Forward Plan

(Copy of latest Forward Plan published 16 October 2014 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the latest Forward Plan published 16 October 2014.

RESOLVED that the latest Forward Plan published 16 October 2014 be approved.

CAB56 Cabinet Action Plan

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

RESOLVED (1) that CAB47 – Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (2) that CAB50 – West Somerset Local Plan – Request for Additional Budget be deleted as actioned.

**CAB57 Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board – Allocations of
Community Impact Mitigation Funding**

(Report No. WSC 148/14 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Hinkley Point C Planning Obligations Board, for the allocation of monies secured through the Section 106 legal agreement for the Site Preparation Works at Hinkley Point. The relevant fund is the “Community Impact Mitigation (CIM)” Fund.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support the Leader presented the item and referred to the nine criteria outlined in the Section 106 agreement which the Planning Obligations Board used to consider applications submitted for consideration.

The Major Projects Manager provided an overview of the applications considered by the Planning Obligations Board and highlighted their recommendations. He advised that there were two representatives from West Somerset Council on the Board which also included members from other organisations including Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Council and EDF Energy. Specific reference was then made to the Durleigh Reservoir and Tropiquaria projects and the officer drew Members’ attention to the legal implications which stated that as part of the decision making process relating to the Community Impact Mitigation Contributions WSC should take the recommendations of the Planning Obligations Board into account.

Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendations contained in the report which were seconded by Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew.

On consideration of the report the following points were raised:

- Disappointment was expressed regarding the Board’s refusal of the Porlock Bay Shellfish Project. Members felt it should have been more favourably considered in light of it matching the criteria in terms of supporting economic growth and tourism, and a request was made that there should be an opportunity for this project to be reassessed by the Board.
- There seemed to be confusion as to what criteria should be considered when determining the applications and it was hoped that future proposals would be better thought out prior to being submitted and more use made of officers to ensure this happened.
- When considering applications, the Planning Obligations Board should take into account those residents living right next to the HPC site and what they will have to endure as a result.
- Concern was expressed regarding other projects which had been turned down by the Planning Obligations Board, and it was hoped that they could be resubmitted for reconsideration in the light of their community benefit.
- Reference was made to missed opportunities and it was felt that applicants who had submitted applications should have tailored their proposals more specifically to meet the criteria.

The Major Projects Officer and the New Nuclear Programme Manager addressed the points raised and confirmed that feedback to the applicant was provided and there was one further opportunity for them to reapply if the application was turned down. Members were informed that a Leisure and Community Facilities Strategy for West Somerset was currently being developed which would help alleviate some of the issues with regards to fulfilling the criteria and the strategy would benefit and help assist people in making links with the Hinkley Point project. It was also confirmed that officers and Engage West Somerset provided advice on particular projects as they come forward via the CIM Fund Manager.

As a result of the suggestion for the Porlock Bay Shellfish Project to be referred back to the Planning Obligations Board due to the criteria not being thought through and applied, an additional recommendation was proposed by Councillor K M Mills and seconded by Councillor D J Westcott.

RESOLVED (1) that the release of £9,600 (excluding VAT) for Somerset Youth and Community Sailing Association based at Durleigh Reservoir for the purchase of four new 'Pico dinghies, covers and trollies from the £3,500,000 that has been paid by EDF to West Somerset Council for the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to allow for the release of £40,000 (excluding VAT) for Tropiquaria towards the relocation of primates' adversely affected by the works at Washford Cross roundabout from the £3,500,000 that has been paid by EDF to West Somerset Council for the Community Impact Mitigation (CIM) Fund.

RESOLVED (3) that Cabinet refer the Porlock Bay Shellfish Project back to the Planning Obligations Board for further consideration because in the opinion of Cabinet the Board have not given sufficient regard to the Sustainability Criteria in this case - specifically the extent to which the project will contribute to the wider goal of achieving sustainable communities and regeneration objectives.

CAB58 **Council Tax Rebate Scheme Review for 2015/16**

(Report No. WSC 142/14 – a revised report was circulated prior to the Meeting.)

The purpose of the report was to provide the Cabinet with information on Council Tax Rebate (CTR) scheme in 2013/14; to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of the public response to consultation on options modelled to incentivise work and encourage people to remain in employment for the Council Tax Rebate Scheme in 2015/16; to advise the Cabinet of the changes and impact of funding arrangements on Council Tax Rebate; and to advise Cabinet of the Policy Advisory Group's recommendations on the Council Tax Rebate Scheme for 2015/16.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer presented the item and reported on section 11 of the revised report which requested Members to give careful consideration to the level of grant funding that was affordable in

2015/16 and subsequent years to mitigate CTR impact on parishes, and he drew Members' attention to the four options contained within the report.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report, and to recommend to Council that Option D be the preferred option in respect of Council Tax Rebate grant funding to be passed on to parish/town councils in 2015/16, which was duly seconded by Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew.

During discussion of this item, the following main points were made:

- To balance the Council's budget the level of funding would have to be reduced by 100%, and if the full saving was not taken, cuts would have to be made elsewhere.
- In response, the Finance Manager provided, as an example, details on how much Minehead Town Council would have to raise their council tax by and the cost to the council tax payer for Option D.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council that the 2014/15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme be retained for 2015/16.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council that Option D (reduce the level of funding passed through to parishes by 100% reducing grant funding by approx. £87,600 to nil) is the preferred option in respect of Council Tax Rebate grant funding to be passed on to parish/town councils in 2015/16.

CAB59 **Non Recovery of Debts in respect of Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust**

(Report No. WSC 147/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek Cabinet approval in accordance with the Financial Regulations to authorise an individual write off in excess of £5,000.

The Leader advised that pending further information the report be deferred.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred.

CAB60 **Earmarked Reserves Review**

(Report No. WSC 150/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek review earmarked reserves to ensure they were still required.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support the Leader presented the item and drew Members' attention to the total amount that was available to be returned to General Reserves from the earmarked reserves.

The Finance Manager advised that a thorough review had been undertaken and budget holders were interviewed in this regard. He also provided Members with information on the general fund balances.

Disappointment was expressed that the New Homes Bonus had not been earmarked for Disabled Facilities Grants and it was proposed and seconded that an additional recommendation be included to read “that should there be a requirement to fund Disabled Facilities Grants in the future, Council should consider the possibility of a supplementary estimate”.

Councillor S J Pugsley proposed the recommendation in the report, subject to the inclusion of an additional recommendation, which was duly seconded by Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew.

RESOLVED (1) that the outcome of the review of earmarked reserves be noted and it be recommended to Council that surplus uncommitted funds amounting to £107,581 are returned to the General Reserve balance.

RESOLVED (2) that should there be a requirement to fund Disabled Facilities Grants in the future, Council should consider the possibility of a supplementary estimate.

CAB61 New Home Improvement Agency Contract

(Report No. WSC 145/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek in-principle approval from the Cabinet to continue to fund the Home Improvement Agency for the next three years. The contract is being re-commissioned across Somerset and SCC who acts as lead commissioner requires a commitment from each funding partner.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the item and provided Members with the background information. He went on to propose the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

During the discussion a question was raised in regard to recycling and buy back and concern was expressed regarding the loss of the Energy Efficiency Officer post.

RESOLVED that the funding of the new Home Improvement Agency and Integrated Community Equipment Service, as shown in the following table for the years 2015/16 and 2017/18, be approved in principle.

Total Contribution	£70,430	£53,825	£50,486	£49,524
<u>West Somerset District Council</u>	Current (2014/15)	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Contribution (Revenue)	£33,230	£22,577	£19,238	£18,276
Fee Charge (Capital top-sliced from DFG pot)	£31,200	£28,920	£28,920	£28,920
Handyperson (Revenue)	£6,000	£2,328	£2,328	£2,328

CAB62 Invest to Save New Homes Bonus Empty Property Coordinator

(Report No. WSC 146/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to approve the proposal to employ an Empty Property Co-ordinator (EPCo). The EPCo will focus solely on interventions to bring empty properties back into use that will have a positive and direct impact on the New Homes Bonus (NHB). The appointment will be initially fixed term for 12 months. The continuation of the post will be based on sustainability, critically the amount of NHB claimed. This will have a focus on maximising NHB, addressing housing need and standards but will also increase housing supply.

The report was presented in detail by the Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing who went on to propose the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor D J Westcott.

RESOLVED that the proposal, attached to the report, to employ an Empty Property Co-ordinator across both the Councils initially for a twelve month period and then continue this if the 'invest to save' business case demonstrates that this post as a minimum pays for itself be approved.

CAB63 **Hinkley Tourism Action Plan – Allocation**

(Report No. WSC 151/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to consult with Cabinet on a suggested approach for commissioning Tourism Monitoring Surveys and a rapid response fund for Watchet.

The Lead Member for Economic Regeneration and Tourism presented the report, providing clarity on the recommendations and explained the background to these decisions. The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew.

In response to concerns raised regarding the amount of money allocated to visitor monitoring surveys and whether a more cost effective option was available, the Lead Member advised that EDF were very clear in stating that the surveys had to be carried out by an accredited agency in a highly professional manner, and the Lead Member confirmed that the costs had been researched. She went on to point out that this would provide much needed evidence on who would be most affected as a result of the Hinkley project. The Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager further reassured Members that a robust procurement process would be undertaken to ensure best value and the surveys would become a valuable tool in providing baseline information on the impact of the project on the tourism industry.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council the allocation of up to a maximum of £40,000 of the Phase 2 (Part One) S106 Tourism mitigation funds for the commissioning of 2 calendar years of visitor monitoring surveys.

RESOLVED (2) that an additional allocation of £5,000 to provide tourism and marketing activity for the town of Watchet to help mitigate any

potential impacts incurred by the up-coming Washford Cross road junction improvements be made available.

RESOLVED (3) that in respect of this allocation, it be recommended to Council to approve an additional expenditure budget of £45,000 to the Revenue Budget for Hinkley Tourism Action Partnership activity with a corresponding income budget of £45,000 from the S106 Contribution.

CAB64 **EDF Housing Funding Strategy**

(Report No. WSC 149/14, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present to Members the recommendations of the Hinkley Point Planning Obligations Board (POB) and to ask that Cabinet recommend to Council the approval of the Housing Funding Strategy (attached at Appendix A to the report). Four associated bids pursuant to the Housing Funding Strategy were also presented and Cabinet was asked to recommend to Council that the allocations be approved.

The Leader of Council introduced the item and drew Members' attention to the housing fund bids and their allocations – namely, Landlord and Tenant Services; Empty Property Regeneration; Home Moves Plus, and SDC Enabling Scheme.

The Housing Initiatives Implementation Officer provided Members with the background information and emphasised the reasons for the Hinkley Housing Fund. She reported that the Housing Funding Strategy was an over-arching strategy which set out the approach to spending the housing fund; and the summary of initiatives, bed spaces and costs were highlighted. The Officer then provided details on each of the four bid proposals.

Members asked a series of questions relating to the Strategy and the four bids.

The Leader proposed the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor K M Mills.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the Housing Funding Strategy (attached as Appendix A to the report) and four initial bids contained in Appendices B – E to the report.

The meeting closed at 7.06 pm