

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2013

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor T Taylor Leader

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

Councillor C Morgan
Councillor A H Trollope-Bellew
Councillor D J Westcott

Members in Attendance:

Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor R P Lillis
Councillor P H Murphy
Councillor L W Smith

Councillor A P Hadley
Councillor E May
Councillor D D Ross
Councillor M A Smith

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive (P James)
Corporate Director (B Lang)
Section 151 Officer (S Campbell)
Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy (I Timms)
Scrutiny and Performance Officer (S Rawle)
Principal Benefits Officer (P Lamb) – Item 8
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Anne Fraser, Portfolio Holder Business Strategy, Sedgemoor District Council
Phillip Adams, Service Manager Economic Development and Housing, Sedgemoor District Council

CAB60 Apologies for Absence

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

CAB61 Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 October 2013

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 2 October 2013 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 2 October 2013 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB62 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 P H Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke
Councillor L W Smith	All	Minehead	Spoke
Councillor K H Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Councillor D J Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted

CAB63 Public Participation

No member of the public had requested to speak.

CAB64 Forward Plan

(Copy of latest Forward Plan published 25 October 2013 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the latest Forward Plan published 25 October 2013.

RESOLVED that, subject to deferring 'Review of Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme' to January 2014, the latest Forward Plan published 25 October 2013 be approved.

CAB65 Cabinet Action Plan

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

RESOLVED (1) that CAB52 – Request for Allocation of Planning Obligations Funding be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (2) that CAB54 – Classification of Earmarked Reserves be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (3) that CAB55 – Somerset Homeless Strategy be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (4) that CAB56 – Homefinder Somerset Common Allocations Policy be deleted as actioned.

RESOLVED (5) that CAB59 – Disposal of Council Owned Assets former Aquasplash site and a site (known as leisure land) along Seaward Way, Minehead be deleted as actioned.

CAB66 Request for Allocation of Section 106 Funding – Fit to Work - Hinkley

(Report No. WSC 142/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline proposals by Sedgemoor District Council to use their proportion of the fit to work funding contribution provided as an element of the Skills and Training part of the Hinkley Point C site preparation works Section 106 agreement, and in line with the requirements of the Section 106 agreement to seek the approval of West Somerset Council for this allocation.

In the absence of the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support, the Leader introduced and welcomed Councillor Anne Fraser and Phillip Adams from Sedgemoor District Council.

The Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy presented the report and advised that it was linked to a report which had been considered and agreed by Members in September and was to be the first in a series of reports coming forward to allocate Section 106 monies. The Fit to Work fund, totalling £60,000, had been split equally between West Somerset Council (WSC) and Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) and he advised that Sedgemoor's proposal was similar to West Somerset's in that it concentrated on four key themes with four project areas.

The Leader raised a concern that due to the potentially large amount of reports being presented to future meetings of Cabinet and Council it could add an unnecessary burden to colleagues from SDC in having to travel to West Somerset and that questioning their allocations of the monies was beyond WSC's remit.

The Corporate Manager advised that WSC had a duty to ensure the process ran properly through the governance mechanisms and had to demonstrate to EDF how the money was accounted for and spent.

Councillor Fraser stated that the reporting process gave an opportunity to demonstrate how the two authorities were working together, and also gave the local community (i.e. the unemployed, hard to reach groups) an opportunity to be 'Hinkley ready' to enable them to take up the opportunities that would inevitably be available.

It was proposed that in order to minimise the impact on Sedgemoor colleagues the process could be looked at again to streamline it and Councillor C Morgan proposed the recommendation in the report with an addition to the printed recommendation to include "that in order to assess whether there was a need to further streamline the process, the governance arrangements would continue to be monitored", which was seconded by Councillor K H Turner.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council to agree the proposed use of the £30,000 Fit to Work funding by Sedgemoor District Council as described in Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED (2) that in order to assess whether there was a need to further streamline the process, the governance arrangements would continue to be monitored.

CAB67 **2014/15 Council Tax Rebate Scheme**

(Report No. WSC 133/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to advise Cabinet of the proposed Council Tax Rebate Scheme for West Somerset.

The Lead Member for Community and Customer presented this item and advised that it was proposed not to change the current scheme for 2014/15. He drew Members' attention to the fact that the scheme was currently 3.85% under budget and would be cost neutral.

An explanation for passported claims was provided and Members debated the need to further investigate the provision of incentives to work as the figures detailed in the report highlighted that the average amount of debt for people who were working was higher than for those unemployed.

In order to demonstrate that the Equalities Impact Assessment, as detailed in Appendix A, had been taken into consideration and that there were no changes to the current scheme, the Lead Member proposed an amended recommendation to read "that it be recommended to Council that no change be made to the 2013/14 Council Tax Rebate Scheme for adoption in 2014/15, with due regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment", which was seconded by Councillor S J Pugsley.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council that no change be made to the 2013/14 Council Tax Rebate Scheme for adoption in 2014/15, with due regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment.

CAB68 **Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding**

(Report No. WSC 141/13, circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review of Flooding.

The Lead Member for Environment - General presented the report and advised that the main aim was to alleviate the problem of flooding in West Somerset and due to the differing degrees of flooding problems throughout the district the policy being adopted was for parish councils to take responsibility for developing their own flood plan.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation in the report, with an amendment to the printed recommendation to replace 'consider' with 'accept', which was seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

Councillor R Lillis, who was a member representative on the Joint Steering Group advised, following concerns that more work should be undertaken on flood prevention rather than alleviation, that the Steering Group would continue to ensure that bodies such as the Environment Agency took the issue of flooding more seriously and accepted more

responsibility, and he assured that the recommendations of the Joint Steering Group would be upheld.

Clarification was sought on the disaggregation of the Drainage Board levy as the recommendation of the Joint Scrutiny Review did not mention that parish councils were allowed to precept, and the Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy advised this was because the levy was only made in the areas where the Internal Drainage Board operated.

It was noted that Minehead was an area in the district which experienced problems with blocked leats which arose from no-one taking responsibility to clear them due to confusion over ownership, and the Corporate Manager Housing, Welfare and Economy reported that investigative work was currently being carried out in this regard. He also advised that a meeting with members of the Scrutiny Committee would take place to provide an update on the range of good work being done at a local level with the parish/town councils where specific areas of flooding occurrence was being looked at.

RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Joint Scrutiny Review at Appendix A to the report, as amended to reflect the views of the Somerset Leaders and Chief Executives contained in Appendix B to the report, be accepted.

The meeting closed at 5.49 pm