

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2017

AT 4.30 PM

IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WILLITON

Present:

Councillor A Trollope-Bellew Leader

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

Councillor M Dewdney
Councillor C Morgan
Councillor K Turner

Members in Attendance:

Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor A Hadley
Councillor P Murphy
Councillor R Woods

Councillor S Goss
Councillor B Heywood
Councillor N Thwaites

Officers in Attendance:

Director of Operations (S Adam)
Democratic Services Manager (R Bryant)
Assistant Director Resources (P Fitzgerald)
Assistant Director Operational Delivery (C Hall)
Economic Regeneration and Tourism Manager (C Matthews)
Finance Manager (J Nacey)
Community and Housing Lead (HPC) (L Redston)
Housing Initiatives Officer (HPC) (B Brown)
Meeting Administrator (K Kowalewska)

Also in Attendance:

Mark Blaker, Business and Governance Manager - Somerset Waste Partnership

CAB57 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

CAB58 Minutes of the Meeting held on 4 January 2017

(Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 January 2017 - circulated with the Agenda.)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet held on 4 January 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

CAB59 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
Cllr C Morgan	All	Stogursey	Spoke and voted
Cllr A Trollope-Bellew	All	Crowcombe	Spoke and voted
Cllr K Turner	All	Brompton Ralph	Spoke and voted
Cllr D Westcott	All	Watchet	Spoke and voted
Cllr S Goss	All	Stogursey	Spoke
Cllr P Murphy	All	Watchet	Spoke
Cllr N Thwaites	All	Dulverton	Spoke

In addition, the following interests were declared:

Name	Minute No.	Description of interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr M Chilcott	CAB63	Landlord	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr S Pugsley	CAB63	Landlord	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr A Trollope-Bellew	CAB63	Landlord	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr K Turner	CAB63	Landlord	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D Westcott	CAB63	Landlord	Personal	Spoke and voted

CAB60 Public Participation

No members of the public spoke at the meeting on any items on the agenda.

CAB61 Forward Plan

(Copy of the Forward Plan for the month of March 2017 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this item was to approve the Forward Plan.

The Chairman of Scrutiny advised Members that the Scrutiny Committee recommended, at its meeting on 19 January 2017, to include an item on the Forward Plan on the review of the achievability of the transfer of public conveniences. In response, the Lead Member for Resources and Central Support undertook to take this issue away and consult on the practicalities of providing a report at this stage of the process with the officers involved in the transfer, and would report back to the Chairman direct.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan for the month of March 2017 be approved.

CAB62 Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan 2017-2022

(Report No. WSC 16/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan for 2017-2022. Whilst the Business Plan had a 5 year horizon, Members were only requested to approve the plan for the financial year 2017/18.

The Lead Member for Environment presented the item and provided some clarity on key elements of the report. He reported that an enhanced recycling process would be delivered over the next two years; advised on plans for a new depot provision; and drew attention to the key aims and priorities contained within the Business Plan, in particular, to the publicity and communications programme.

The Lead Member for Environment proposed the recommendations in the report which were duly seconded by Councillor M Chilcott.

It was reported that during the Recycle More trials there was a significant increase in the overall recycling levels.

It was also reported that the introduction of van and trailer permits and restrictions had achieved its primary objective of reducing congestion during busy periods. Further to concerns raised, it was advised that SWP would welcome any feedback on the matter and comments received would be included as part of the review taking place in June 2017.

RESOLVED (1) that the Somerset Waste Partnership's Budget for 2017-2018 be approved.

RESOLVED (2) that the Somerset Waste Partnership's business plan for 2017-2022 be noted.

CAB63 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy (Phase 2)

(Report No. WSC 12/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to present the Phase 2 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy for approval.

The Lead Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing presented the report and provided detailed background information. He commented on the aims of the HPC Housing Fund Strategy and welcomed the Housing Initiatives Officer to the meeting who would be involved in the promotion and monitoring of housing schemes and initiatives. It was noted the Phase 1 housing initiatives designed to create new bed spaces had exceeded the target.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation of the report which was seconded by Councillor M Dewdney.

Members acknowledged and understood the reasons why initiatives had not succeeded very well in some areas, and the Community and Housing Lead provided reassurance that the Council was working with Sedgemoor District Council and local partners to identify these schemes in order to progress and improve the situation. It was felt that improved promotion of the activities was needed to ensure the public were aware of the initiatives within the Strategy and the funding which was available, and it was reported that a communications campaign was underway.

The priorities for the housing initiatives and how to access the funding and schemes was further explained. It was advised the main aim was to provide a range of accommodation to meet the needs of the community due to the impacts of HPC on the local housing market, providing accommodation that would be attractive to all as well as being accessible to people on low incomes.

RESOLVED that it be recommended to Council to approve the principles and outline expenditure as set out in the Phase 2 Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy and to delegate responsibility for approving minor amendments to the planned expenditure set out in the Strategy to the Hinkley Housing Board.

CAB64 **Hinkley Point C Development Consent Obligation Section 106 – Business Support Initiatives**

(Report No. WSC 9/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to outline proposals relating to the Business Support Initiatives allocation for West Somerset that formed part of the Hinkley Point C (HPC) Development Consent Order Section 106 Agreement.

The Leader Member for Regeneration and Economic Growth presented the item and emphasised that the allocations to the Council for business support initiatives related to proposals during years 3 and 4 of the Economic Development Allocation, and initiatives relevant to economic development activity had been identified. The proposals would have a direct positive impact on key themes and issues set out in the Council's Corporate Strategy. The Lead Member encouraged Members to read Appendix A of the report which promoted the work of the Economic Development Team and detailed how the activity had benefited the local community.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor D Westcott.

The Economic Development Team were congratulated on the work undertaken and for securing match funding on many of the activities to date. The information contained in Appendix A encapsulated all the good work that had been achieved, and there were great opportunities for businesses to engage in.

RESOLVED that the proposals detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report be agreed and that it be recommended to Council to approve the drawdown of the HPC S106 Business Support Initiatives allocation for West Somerset of £159,792 to support and grow economic development activity in West Somerset aligned to the impacts and opportunities created by the HPC Project.

CAB65 **Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Vehicles to support the New Operating Model**

(Report No. WSC 10/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this report was to provide detail in relation to a request to lend £3.5m to the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) for the purchase of new vehicles associated with the New Operating Model. There might be a later request for a further advance in relation to new or reconfigured depots but the details of these and the funding required were not yet available.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and provided details of the loan requirement. She proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor S Pugsley.

In response to a question, the Director of Operations highlighted the risk assessment contained within the report which described the issues relevant to the loan agreement and the associated risks if the borrower failed to make repayments.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council to approve the provision of £3.5m capital loan to the Somerset Waste Partnership in 2017/18, to fund the acquisition of new vehicles, based on the PWLB rate + 1% with final terms and conditions to be agreed by the S151 Officer.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to include the associated budget approval of £3.5m in the Capital Programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED (3) that the risks and potential benefits for the Council's financial position through the generation of additional net interest income be noted.

CAB66 **Capital Programme Draft Budget Estimate 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 8/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to set out the Draft 2017/18 Capital Programme to enable Cabinet to recommend proposals to Council for approval.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and provided background information. She proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor C Morgan.

RESOLVED (1) that it be recommended to Council to approve the 2016/17 Capital Programme Budget totalling £3,872,500, funded through a combination of capital receipts reserves, external grant funding and borrowing.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to delegate authority to the S151 Officer to approve adjustments to the 2017/18 Disabled Facilities Grant Capital Budget to reflect the final grant funding received from the Better Care Fund.

CAB67 Annual Budget and Council Tax 2017/18

(Report No. WSC 7/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of this report was to set out the Draft Budget and proposed Council Tax for 2017/18 to enable Cabinet to recommend proposals to Full Council for approval.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and provided detailed background information. In addition to highlighting the key points from the report, she advised that the Final Settlement had not yet been decided upon by the Government, and that it may not be settled by the time the report was presented to Full Council on 22 March 2017. The funding available to the Council to deliver services had reduced by £752,000 in one year and the reasons for the reduction in funding were emphasised.

Reference was made to the implementation of a Council Tax increase of 3.4% (£5 on a Band D) and the Lead Member asked that when explaining the increase to parish and town councils, it be communicated that this meant an increase of £5 a year or equivalent.

The enormity of what the Council was facing was realised. Both West Somerset Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council had challenging budgets for 2017/18 and the transformation of services alone would not close the budget gap going forward. The Lead Member underlined how important it was for the Council to now start planning on how to make savings for 2018/19 and beyond, and be ready for the challenge.

The Lead Member proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor K Mills.

The hard work of the Finance Team was acknowledged and Members thanked everyone who had been involved in preparing the budget paper.

The significant impact of the 2017 Business Rates revaluation and the requirement to maintain financial provisions in respect of the risk associated with the Hinkley B appeal was discussed. Conversations with Government were crucial at this stage to try and obtain clarification on the Business Rates position. Progression of the case to create a new council was also regarded as crucial in attempting to address the challenges ahead.

RESOLVED (1) that the forecast Medium Term Financial Plan and Reserves position, and the S151 Officer's Robustness Statement, as set out in Appendix C of the report, be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to approve the 2017/18 Draft Budget, subject to any amendments required as a result of the Final Funding Settlement.

RESOLVED (3) that it be recommended to Council to approve a 2017/18 Council Tax increase of 3.4%, increasing the Band D basic tax rate by £5 to £152.32, comprising £150.56 for services and £1.76 on behalf of the Somerset Rivers Authority.

RESOLVED (4) that it be recommended to Council that £143,100 from existing capital receipts reserves is set aside to fund capital debt repayment in 2018/19, in lieu of Minimum Revenue Provision, and the RCCO provision of £39,000 per year from 2018/19 onwards is removed from the MTFP.

CAB68 **Draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy 2017/18**

(Report No. WSC 11/17 – circulated with the Agenda.)

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of the recommended strategy for managing the Council's cash resources including the approach to borrowing and investments. It also sought the formal approval of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy which must be approved by Full Council by 31 March each year in line with regulations.

The Lead Member for Resources and Central Support presented the item and drew attention to the proposed operational boundary. She proposed the recommendations of the report which were seconded by Councillor S Pugsley.

RESOLVED (1) that the Prudential Indicators included within the TMSS which included limits for borrowing and investment be noted.

RESOLVED (2) that it be recommended to Council to approve the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS), Annual Investment Strategy and MRP Policy as included with the report.

The meeting closed at 6.07 pm