

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 3.30 pm**

**Present:**

Councillor P H Murphy .....Chairman  
Councillor N Thwaites .....Vice-Chairman

Councillor R Clifford  
Councillor B Maitland-Walker  
Councillor R Woods  
Councillor G S Dowding  
Councillor J Parbrook

**Members in Attendance:**

Councillor M Chilcott  
Councillor M Dewdney  
Councillor B Heywood  
Councillor A Trollope-Bellew

**Officers in Attendance:**

Assistant Director – Operational Delivery (C Hall)  
Assistant Director – Resources (P Fitzgerald)  
Finance Manager and Deputy s151 Officer (J Nacey)  
Somerset Waste Partnership – Business Improvement Officer (M Blaker)  
Democratic Services Manager (R Bryant)  
Democratic Services Officer (C Rendell)  
Democratic Services Officer (A Randell)

**SC 61 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received by Councillor I Aldridge, B Leaker, K Mills and K Turner.

**SC 62 Minutes**

(Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 15 December 2016 – circulated with the Agenda.)

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on 15 December 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.

**SC 63 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.	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial or Disclosable Pecuniary	Action Taken
Cllr B Maitland - Walker	All Items	Carhampton	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr P H Murphy	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr J Parbrook	All items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and voted

Further declarations were stated by:-

Councillor Maitland-Walker declared a personal Interest as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board

#### **SC 64 Cabinet Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Cabinet Forward Plan published 4 January 2017, circulated at the meeting)

- It was requested for an item of reviewing the achievability of the transfer of public toilets to be added to the forward plan for a future meeting date.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Forward Plan published on 4 January 2017, be noted.

#### **SC 65 Somerset Waste Partnership Business Plan**

The report WSC 2/17 was introduced and presented by Chris Hall and Mark Blaker.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval for the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan for 2017-2022, which was attached to the report. Whilst the business plan had a 5 year horizon Members were requested to approve the plan for the financial year 2017/18. The cost increase in comparison with 2016/17 was set at £25,000. The budget for 2017/18 was set with a contract increase in mind however the actual increase was greater than planned, adding an additional pressure of £4,000 pa.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Confirmation was given that green waste was a statutory service.
- In reference to the risk register it was requested that a bid to the CIM fund be considered to match the wages of similar job roles advertised at the Hinkley Point site to mitigate against loss of employees from the Somerset Waste Partnership.
- It was confirmed that waste generated at the Hinkley point site was commercial, therefore the costs for this would be covered by the project.
- It was established that there were no plans to adopt a 4 weekly cycle.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Review and approve the Somerset Waste Partnership's Budget for 2017-2018.
- 2) Note the content for the business plan 2017-2022.

**SC 66**    **Transfer of Public Conveniences Update**

The report WSC 3/17 was presented by Councillor Murphy.

The report made reference to the outcome of the Cabinet Report WSC 1/17 which was considered at the meeting of Cabinet held on 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2017. The report provided an update on the latest position in regard to the transfer of public conveniences and considered the most effective way in which the Scrutiny Committee could monitor the implementation of the agreed policy.

During discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Members expressed concerns over viring monies from harbour budgets for the purposes of funding the transfer of public conveniences. It was suggested that the use of general reserves be considered.
- The improved situation in relating to the ongoing the asset transfers and work undertaken in resolving issues was commended.
- Councillors requested for a further update to be provided at the committee in March.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee noted the progress to date of the transfer of public conveniences and requested a further update report be provided in March

**SC 67**    **Financial Standing and Medium Term Financial Plan 2017/18**

The report WSC 4/17 was introduced by Councillor Chilcott and presented by Jo Nacey and Paul Fitzgerald.

The purpose of the report was to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on budget estimates for 2017/18 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) forecasts, and to consult with Members on the proposed means of closing the residual Budget Gap for 2017/18.

During discussion, the following points were raised: -

- Members were made aware that the Somerset Rivers Authority had not been designated as a precepting authority. This was part of the Home and Communities Bill being considered through parliament. It was anticipated for this to be resolved by next year and there would be no difference in terms of charge at council tax setting.
- Councillors expressed disappointment over the 'top slicing' of New Homes Bonus funding, it was suggested for a letter to be written to

central government, making them aware of the effect this has on rural and deprived areas.

- Confirmation was given that a formal letter had been sent out on behalf of the leaders of both Councils. This was still an ongoing issue.
- The use of reserves for 2017/18 was discussed, members stressed the need for identifying underspends along with the importance of funding to remain available in the business rates smoothing reserve.
- Deprivation in rural areas remained a concern, ascertaining the levels of this in the area remained challenging.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee noted the latest budget estimates.

**SC 68**     **Capital Programme Draft Budget Estimates 2017/18**

The report WSC 5/17 was introduced by Councillor Chilcott.

The purpose of the report was to provide members with the detail of the Capital bids for the 2017/18 Capital Programme and the proposed source of funding.

No comments or questions were raised.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee noted the Draft 2017/18 Capital Programme totaling £372,500 and the current unallocated capital resources position.

**SC 69**     **Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Vehicles to support the New Operating Model**

The report WSC 5/17 was introduced by Councillor Chilcott.

The purpose of the report was to provide detail in relation to a request to lend between £1.26m and £3.5m to the Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP) for the purchase of new vehicles associated with the New Operating Model.

During discussion, the following points were raised: -

- The committee voiced broad support in supporting the proposals and encouraged similar ideas and projects with other partnerships.
- The combined benefits of a return of interest from the loan in addition to a reduction in costs of the service was commended.
- In the event of the Somerset Waste Partnership being dissolved the local authorities would take ownership of the vehicles.
- Members suggested the use of internal borrowing to fund this.
- Reassurance was given that this still allowed room for additional borrowing capacity if needed. Borrowing capability was based on income along with reserves.

**RESOLVED** that:- The Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Noted the report and support the principle of providing a capital loan to the Somerset Waste Partnership up to £3.5m.
- 2) Noted the potential benefits and risks for the Councils financial position through the generation of additional net interest income.

**Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**

**RESOLVED** that:- the Scrutiny Forward Plan published on 11 January 2017 be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.05pm.