

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 26 January 2016 at 6.30 p.m.

Present The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Hill)
 The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams)
 Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Aldridge, Beale, Berry,
 Mrs Blatchford, Bowrah, Brown, Coles, Coombes, Davies, D Durdan,
 Miss Durdan, Mrs Edwards, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gage, Gaines,
 Mrs Gunner, Habgood, Mrs Herbert, C Hill, Horsley, Hunt, James,
 R Lees, Ms Lisgo, Morrell, Nicholls, Parrish, Prior-Sankey, Mrs Reed,
 Ross, Ryan, Miss Smith, Mrs Smith, Sully, Townsend, Mrs Tucker,
 Mrs Warmington, Watson, Ms Webber, Williams and Wren

Mrs A Elder – Chairman of the Standards Advisory Committee

1. Apologies

Councillors Cavill, Edwards, Govier, Hall, Mrs Lees and Wedderkopp.

2. Communciations

The Mayor drew to the attention of Councillors the forthcoming Soroptimists International's 'Swimathon' on Saturday, 20 February 2016 at Taunton School. She hoped Councillors would again be able to form a team to support this very worthwhile event.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillors M Adkins, Coles and Hunt declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillor Beale declared personal interests as a Board Member and Director of Tone FM and as a Governor of the South West Ambulance NHS Trust. Councillors Gage and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Mrs Herbert declared a personal interest as an employee of the Department of Work and Pensions. Councillor Ms Lisgo declared a personal interest as a Director of Tone FM. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as the owner of land in Taunton Deane. Councillor Coombes declared a personal interest as a Stoke St Mary Parish Councillor and as the owner of land at Haydon.

4. Southwest One Succession Planning

Considered report previously circulated, which summarised the work undertaken on the Southwest One (SW1) Succession Planning Options Review together with the conclusions reached.

Members received a presentation from officers on the work undertaken in

connection with the Review.

The Review had identified and recommended that the Council should seek an early and phased exit of services from the SW1 contract, ideally via negotiation with SW1.

This early exit of key services was required in order to facilitate Members ambitions for the transformation of the Council including the ability to unlock significant savings through the implementation of a new approach to customer access. Specifically the report identified the ICT and Customer Contact services as being central to our ability to deliver these ambitions.

The continuing suitability of the SAP software systems (Back Office, Customer Relationship Management and the Web Portal) had also been considered in detail by the Review.

The Review had concluded that these were no longer appropriate software platforms and should be replaced by cheaper and more flexible alternatives, which were better suited to an organisation of Taunton Deane's size and to the rapidly changing world of Local Government.

The report set out a number of detailed recommendations for Members to consider in relation to the early exit of services, the means by which this should be achieved and the replacement of the SAP systems.

Further reported that the Council still had 43 secondee staff in SW1. There were also secondee staff and directly hired staff some of whom might potentially transfer to Taunton Deane with any return of services. The end of the contract also had potential implications for staff in associated retained services - Finance, Debtors, HR, ICT and Customer Services.

Consequently the Review had considered in detail the implications for staff of the ending of the contract and the implications of any earlier potential early exit.

A consultation exercise had been undertaken with UNISON and the staff in potentially affected services regarding the conclusions and recommendations from the Review. Initial feedback had been favourable and full details of the consultation responses received had been circulated to Members for their information.

During the discussion of this matter, it was **resolved** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting to allow a further confidential presentation to be made to Councillors and discussion to take place of the confidential appendices to the report with regard to contract end provisions, the financial implications, staffing implications and a risk review. The exclusion was considered necessary because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

The recommendations included a request for funding to implement these

proposals. Noted that the costs of exit would be similar whether the Council exited early or allowed the contract to run to the end of its term on 1 November 2017.

The SW1 Succession Planning had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2016 where Members had decided to support the recommendations to Full Council.

Resolved that:-

(1) Authority be granted:-

- (i) To formally notify Southwest One that the Council would not extend its contract beyond the original contractual 10-year term which expired on 1 November 2017;
- (ii) To engage in formal discussions with Southwest One (and the other partners) to pursue and implement a negotiated and phased exit of services from the Southwest One contract in line with the suggested phasing outlined in the report. (This would include authorising officers to negotiate, agree and implement, where required, to facilitate the smooth or early exit, temporary shared service or co-location arrangements with the other partners);
- (iii) To implement the following service delivery methods for the returning services:-
 - In-house Service Delivery – Finance and HR transactional services, ICT and Procurement (NB In-house delivery was recommended as the initial option to allow the Council to safely return these services from Southwest One. Once returned Taunton Deane would need to identify the best long-term delivery option for these services);
 - External Service Delivery – Payroll (continue to buy-in the service, as Taunton Deane did prior to Southwest One and potentially via Somerset County Council); and
 - Potential Shared Service – Progress discussions with Somerset County Council with regard to continuing Customer Contact as a shared service dependent on this aligning with the Council's direction of travel (or provide the service in-house);
- (iv) Where a negotiated exit had not been agreed by 29 February 2016, to serve the necessary notices on Southwest One to implement early termination of the entire contract in line with the contractual provisions;
- (v) To procure and implement alternative software solutions to replace the SAP Back Office, Customer Relationship Management and Web Portals;

(2) The budget, as outlined in the confidential Finance Appendix E to the

report, be approved to fund the exit from the contract and the implementation of alternative software solutions to the SAP system; and

- (3) It be agreed that a Member Steering Group be set up to act as an oversight and advisory body in relation to the implementation of the exit from Southwest One.

(The meeting ended at 8.03 p.m.)