

SWT Executive - 23 October 2019

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Ross Henley, Marcus Kravis, Peter Pilkington, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith and Alan Wedderkopp

Officers: James Barrahan, Nick Bryant, Brendan Cleere, Paul Fitzgerald, Paul Harding, James Hassett, Gerry Mills, Sarah Povall, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Graeme Thompson and Fiona Webb

Also Present: Councillors Ian Aldridge, Hugh Davies, Dave Durdan, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Brenda Weston and Gwil Wren

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

48. Apologies

An apology was received from Councillor R Lees.

49. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 18 September 2019 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 18 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

50. Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke

51. **Public Participation**

No members of the public had requested to speak on any item on the agenda.

52. **Executive Forward Plan**

(Copy of the Executive Forward Plan, circulated with the agenda).

Councillors were reminded that if they had an item they wanted to add to the agenda, that they should send their requests to the Governance Team.

Resolved that the Executive Forward Plan be noted.

53. **Corporate Equalities Action Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the induction sessions held for Councillors and that the Equality Workshop had not been made mandatory for attendance. *The Portfolio Holder for Community agreed and highlighted that the attendance had been poor for the induction session and welcomed another session being held. He was keen to set up a group to review and update the equality actions and wanted to get officers involved in the training sessions.*
- The Leader welcomed the comments made and advised that the Equality Action Plan was a 'living' document so would be continually updated. She agreed that training was important and should be made mandatory.
- Concern was raised on the generic use of the word disabled and that it could cover a number of disabilities. Councillors requested that there should be distinctions given between the different types of disabilities within the document. *The Strategy Specialist advised that the range of disabilities should be addressed as part of the Equality Impact Assessment.*
- Councillors queried whether an audit had been carried out on how the various Outside Bodies were funded by the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Community confirmed that a meeting had been set up to review the funding given to Outside Bodies.

- The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources highlighted the importance of unconscious bias and offered to hold a Member Briefing on the subject. *The Strategy Specialist advised that they had reviewed the e-learning packages that could support the work on a Member Briefing on unconscious bias.*
- Councillors agreed with the report recommendations and thanked officers for their work.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- a) Reviewed and approved the Plan, with the amendments suggested by the Audit, Governance & Standards Committee; and
- b) Adopted the equality objective referred to within para 4.10 of the report.

54. **Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the principles that were included in the document and that they should sit within the boundaries of the Garden Town and that developments could overlap the boundaries.
- Councillors wanted reassurance that the document fed into the Local Plan and queried whether the neighbourhood plans were linked to the Local Plan or whether they were an interim measure. Concern was raised on the ability to enforce the document.
The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation agreed that the document was only as good as how it was implemented and enforced. The Head of Strategy advised that it was an interim measure until the district wide Design Guide was introduced.
- The Leader supported the document and highlighted that it set out the vision of the Council and set the tone for developers so they knew where and how the Council wanted to deliver projects.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- a) Recommended that Full Council formally adopt the Taunton Garden Town Charter and Checklist as Council policy and technical guidance for development control purposes to help the Local Planning Authority assess the quality of proposed developments and to clearly set out the standard expected for well-designed homes and neighbourhoods in the Garden Town area; and
- b) Authorised the Head of Strategy, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to make any necessary editorial corrections and minor amendments to the document, and to agree the final publication style.

55. **Somerset Climate Emergency Framework and SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors supported the work that had been carried out and were pleased to see actions put in place that were being followed up with details.
- Councillors on the Shadow Executive supported the document and agreed that it was essential that the Council took action. They were pleased to see the projects and commitments within the report and that the Council was taking the issues seriously. They highlighted that there was still work to be done but it was a good starting point.
- The Leader thanked the Councillors for their support. The document was the golden thread that linked all that they wanted to achieve and agreed that it was a starting point and that work would continue on the project.
- Councillors thanked officers for their work and wanted them to relay and publicise that discussions and debates were taking place to show members of the public that the Council took climate change seriously.
- The Portfolio Holder for Climate Change thanked the Councillors for their comments and advised that they were due to start work on the Green Audit on the Councils actions, buildings and other assets.

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 1) Noted the comments of the Scrutiny Committee and the Climate Change Member Working Group included in the appended minutes of each meeting;
- 2) Noted the timeline for delivery of both documents, and high level comments in relation to funding and resources going forward;
- 3) Endorsed the Draft SWT Framework as a driver for stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities over November 2019 – January 2020;
- 4) Delegated authority to agree and endorse the future Draft SWT Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience Plan due in early Spring 2020 to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change (Cllr Peter Pilkington) in consultation with the Climate Change Member Working Group, noting that the final draft strategy would come to Executive and Full Council for approval;
- 5) Endorsed the Draft Somerset-wide Framework as a driver for stakeholder engagement and public consultation activities subject to potential amendments to be discussed with the Joint Task and Finish Group and agreed by the Joint Cabinet/Portfolio Holders Group, in line with the agreed governance arrangements; and
- 6) Delegated authority to agree and endorse the future Draft Somerset-wide Strategy due in early Spring 2020 to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change (Cllr Peter Pilkington) in consultation with the Joint Task and Finish Group, noting that the final strategy would come to Executive and Full Council for approval.

56. **Small Scale Industrial Space Local Development Order - Approval for Public Consultation**

Resolved that the item be deferred until the meeting of the Executive scheduled for 20 November 2019.

57. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the press and public be excluded during consideration of agenda item 14 on the grounds that, if the press and public were present during the item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows: The item contained information that could release confidential information that related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It was therefore agreed that after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

58. **SWT Commercial Investment Strategy**

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development introduced the report which concerned the proposed Commercial Investment Strategy for Somerset West and Taunton Council. The Strategy was one of the key pillars that supported the delivery of additional income needed by the Council to meet the targets set within the Financial Strategy that Executive approved on 18 September 2019, which aimed to achieve ongoing financial stability.

Recommended to Council to approve the recommendations contained as written within the report.

(The Meeting ended at 8.20 pm)