

SWT Full Council - 25 August 2020

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Simon Coles, Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Dave Durdan, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Dawn Adey, James Barra, Emily Collacott, Lesley Dolan, Chris Hall, Paul Harding, James Hassett, Steve Hughes, Mark Leeman, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas and Mark Wathen

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

21. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors P Bolton, H Davies, H Farbahi, L Lisgo, Martin Hill, D Perry and T Venner.

22. 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 L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	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 and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

23. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16**

Mrs Susan Goss spoke on agenda item 7, Hinkley Point C Housing Strategy (Phase 3):-

Stogursey Parish currently played host to the 510 bed Hinkley Campus in addition to several HMO's all occupied by transient HPC contractors.

The Parish had no appetite for any further housing development related as a result of the HPC construction - apart from that already specified for a Primary Settlement, as in the extant Local Plan. This community felt that it had already done more than its share to facilitate this development, having suffered at first hand from the noise, dust and traffic issues created by the largest construction site in Europe, over the last 12 years.

Whilst understanding the use of the relatively old Housing Needs Survey to ascertain perceived local housing requirements, it should be borne in mind that this survey was innately flawed - as it incorporated the whole of Quantock Ward and not just Stogursey Parish. Having obtained the actual relevant figures for Stogursey from one of the Housing Team at the time, it appeared that the actual housing needs for this Parish alone, were relatively small.

It should also be borne in mind that any increase on the back of an uptake in HPC Workers, over and above that permitted by the DCO, should not be used as a driver for any further housing development in the Parish - apart from that already stated in the Local Plan.

Even when HPC becomes operational there would not be the forecast 500 extra workers moving to the area. This was due to the fact that some of the existing HPC employees were currently retraining in operational roles, plus the fact that it was planned that existing HPB operational staff would transfer to HPC when decommissioning of HPB commenced in 2023.

Stogursey Parish would welcome further funding to improve life for residents if further monies were available but did not, under any circumstances, want or require further housing developments related to the HPC project.

Under normal circumstances Stogursey was a quiet rural idyll - residents would like it to remain so.

The words of a senior Government official from DECC, who made a visit to the Parish before construction began, were particularly relevant when he stated (off the record naturally) that we were the 'sacrificial lambs for this project. This Parish had indeed already paid the price.....

Thank you for listening. Sue Goss Vice Chair Stogursey Parish Council

Cllr Fran Smith responded as follows:-

The proposals themselves did not propose any new developments in the Parish. Seaward Way, Lambrook House (both in Minehead) and Canonsgrove in Taunton were the only development based activities in the plan, which targeted affordable homes and supported vulnerable customers.

We had some funding to specifically support Stogursey, which came about because the number of workers in the Parish went over the agreed cap in the DCO (50 instead of 44). We had added some funds to take the total amount to £45k. The new Delivery Officer would work with the community to develop a plan that looked at housing and community issues together, and worked up solutions together.

In terms of new development that may or may not come forward, these would be dealt with by the usual planning processes - which was carried out in alignment

with local plan policies. Each application was assessed on its own merits and in relation to the impact the development would have on the area in terms of things like environment, local services and facilities. This assessment did not include whether the development would eventually house HPC workers. There were stipulations for every development in terms of affordable housing.

That said this Strategy recognised that Stogursey required its own specific focus due to its proximity to the site and generally the impacts the community has had to face over the years. We needed to start by supporting the community in reviewing impacts, and looking to see what it was we could do to support housing and rental related needs in the area.

24. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair of the Council made the following announcements:-

- The Chair had attended Eat Minehead and was pleased to see such a lovely event taking place whilst adhering to social distancing.
- The Chair had attended the VJ Day Service at Wells Cathedral and laid a wreath.
- A minutes silence was held on behalf of three previous councillors who had passed away, Sally de Renzy Martin, George Burnell and Brian Dennington.

25. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council made the following announcements:-

- The Leader was pleased to see life slowly returning to the area after lockdown.
- She had attended the VJ Day event held by 40 Commando.
- The Leader advised that Somerset West and Taunton Council had participated in Eat Minehead and had a stall to assist and engage with the community.
- She thanked officers for all their hard work and how they had handled the covid-19 pandemic.

26. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions were received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

27. **Discretionary Rate Relief Policy**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and were happy to support the recommendations.

- Councillors requested clarification on the funds and the percentages paid by Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWT) and those paid by Central Government.
Clarification was given.
- Councillors queried the maximum figure stated for the applicable rateable values and whether that was for one or multiple premises.
The Strategy Specialist advised that the figure set for the rateable values was based on those located in major towns and cities, so he did not believe that any of the businesses in the SWT area would be impacted by the maximum limit.
- Councillors queried whether businesses were expected to make contact or whether officers would assist in the application process.
The Strategy Specialist advised that it would be a tool for the Economic Development Team to use if they were aware of an employer in need of support.
- Concern was raised on those businesses located in the rural area of the district who fell outside of the limits used for small business rate relief and discretionary relief and what support was available for them.
The Strategy Specialist advised that those businesses were mainly shops and public houses, who were not deemed as major employers in the area. They should have also received a business rates 'holiday' for the tax year.
- Councillors further queried whether manufacturing and non-tourism based businesses were able to gain assistance.
The Strategy Specialist advised that any company could apply for assistance through the hardship scheme and discretionary rate relief if they demonstrated a need for support.
- Councillors were keen to support the report as it gave extra support to the major employers and businesses in the area.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 1) Approved the temporary Addendum to the Council's existing Discretionary Rate Relief Policy; and
- 2) Noted the costs of additional discretionary business rates relief would need to be allocated as a cost to the 2021/22 General Fund Budget to repay the resulting Collection Fund Deficit, and supported in principle the allocation of business rates pooling gain to meet the costs of the scheme, underwritten by General Reserves.

28. **Hinkley Point C Housing Strategy (Phase 3)**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the Stogursey area and their planning issues.
The Strategy Specialist advised that the Strategy was not proposing any new housing in the Stogursey area. Any items in the development process was separate to the Strategy. Officers were restricted by the Section 106 Agreement for planning applications.
- Councillors requested a new housing need survey to be carried out for the Stogursey area.

The Strategy Specialist advised that he had sympathy with the area as the previous housing needs survey was flawed and that the demographic who had responded were from the older age ranges and that there had been a lack of responses from the working age residents. The Strategy had money set aside to carry out work in the Stogursey area to assess the housing need.

- Concern was raised that the residents would link the Strategy and Planning together.
- Councillors requested that the figures were presented in a different manner that included Parish information.
- Councillors welcomed Seaward Way and Lambrook House being included in the Strategy but requested assurance that a proper mix of house types were included in the development and that it would remain as social housing.

The Strategy Specialist advised that there would be a mixture of housing types used at Seaward Way and that a report was due to go through the democratic path with more detailed information on the project.

- Concern was raised on the information included in the Equality Impact Assessment and on those that might be impacted.
- Councillors wanted the Local Plan adopted to protect the local community.
- Councillors understood the concern raised at Stogursey and that the Hinkley project had impacted on the area, but that the item was for the Strategy and not for Planning, so they were happy to support the report.

Resolved that Full Council adopted the Hinkley Point C Housing Fund Strategy (Phase 3) and supporting project activity (Appendix 4 to the report).

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

Resolved that the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the item numbered 10 on the Agenda as the item contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 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.

30. **Leisure Contract**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations numbered 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 within the confidential report.

(The Meeting ended at 8.50 pm)