

SWT Executive - 21 September 2022

Present: Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts (Chair)
Councillors Benet Allen, Chris Booth, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Andrew Sully and Sarah Wakefield

Officers: James Barrah, Chris Hall, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Clare Rendell, Kerry Prisco, John Rendell and Malcolm Riches

Also Present: Councillors Sue Buller, Simon Coles, Marcus Kravis, Brenda Weston and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

128. **Apologies**

An apology was received from Councillor D Perry.

129. **Minutes of the previous meeting of the Executive**

(Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 20 July 2022 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of the Executive held on 20 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

130. **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 S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr D Darch	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Kravis	All Items	SCC & Minehead	Personal	Spoke
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Sully	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Wakefield	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke

131. **Public Participation**

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

132. **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.

133. **Proposal to increase the maximum hackney carriage fares**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors highlighted that they had already raised the fares in January 2022, as they had not been increased for ten years. This report was to ensure the fares were increased to fall in line with the rise in fuel costs.
- Councillors reminded attendees that the proposed fares were the maximum that a taxi driver could charge.
- Councillors highlighted that the electric vehicles were also impacted by the increase in the cost of living.
- Councillors agreed that this would give the taxi drivers the opportunity to raise the fares if they needed to.
- Councillors queried if the taxi drivers had requested this review.
The Licensing Specialist advised that it had been raised at the recent Taxi Forum.

Resolved that the Executive approved to vary the current table of maximum fares as per the published proposal, and such changes to come into effect on the 22nd of September 2022.

134. **Corporate Performance Report - Quarter 1 2022/23**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors highlighted that the report made it clear what challenges faced the Council.

- Councillors agreed that the report also included positive results and high-performance markers.
- Councillors queried how the report would transfer over to the New Council. *The Business Intelligence and Performance Manager advised that officers were working on the process for post Vesting Day and the work included the risk register and performance indicators.*
- Councillors requested clarification on call waiting times.
- Councillors thanked the officers at the Deane Helpline for all their hard work.
- Councillors queried what the current stress levels were like for officers. *The Chief Executive advised that officers were understandably tired as they had been on a programme of change for the last five years, with Transformation, Covid and Unitary Council. However, he thanked the officers as the service level was still high due to the hard work and dedication of the teams.*
- Councillors were pleased to see that Housing was in the green or improving section.
- Councillors highlighted that complaints were dealt with and learnt from to help improve service delivery.
- Councillors thanked the work force at Somerset West and Taunton Council for their exemplary service.

Resolved that the Executive noted the Council's performance report.

135. **2022/23 General Fund Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2022)**

During the discussion, the following point was raised:-

- Councillors queried whether the car park improvement figure was being capitalised and whether the Council were allowed to do so. *The Chief Executive assured councillors that the work was being carried out with due diligence and that they checked every line to ensure that what could be capitalised, could be done. This work would help going into the New Council.*

Resolved that the Executive:-

- 2.1 Noted the Council's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2022/23 financial year as of 30 June 2022.
- 2.2 Approved budget transfers ("virement") of:
 - a) £473,420 to realign budgets in both Bereavement Services and Grounds Maintenance reflecting the accounting change of the service level agreement.
 - b) £302,040 to realign budgets across Commercial Services to mitigate the forecast pressure on car parking income.
- 2.3 Approved a transfer of £1,200,000 from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve with £1,000,000 to the Investment Risk Reserve and £200,000 to the Investment Sinking Fund.

136. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public - Appendix E ONLY**

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next item of business (Agenda Item 10 – Appendix E only) on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

137. **2022/23 Housing Revenue Account Financial Monitoring as at Quarter 1 (30 June 2022)**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillor M Rigby left the meeting.
- Councillors thanked officers for the helpful report.
- Concern was raised that the increase in the cost of construction could lead to a delay in some projects.

The Director for Housing advised that phosphates had caused a few delays as well as the increase in construction costs. He advised that day to day repairs would not be delayed, as the Council had a duty of care as a landlord. He acknowledged that the capital costs of contracts and major projects was a challenge faced by the whole sector.

- Councillors requested clarification on re-charging.
- Councillors agreed that it was an impressive report and that work had been carried out even though the service had been faced with some challenges.

Resolved that the Executive noted the HRA's forecast financial performance and projected reserves position for 2022/23 financial year as at 30 June 2022.

(The Meeting ended at 7.05 pm)