

SWT Full Council - 6 September 2022

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Richard Lees, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Tom Deakin, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Steve Griffiths, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Nicole Hawkins, Ross Henley, John Hunt, Dawn Johnson, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Andy Milne, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Derek Perry, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Ray Tully, Sarah Wakefield, Danny Wedderkopp and Loretta Whetlor

Officers: Lesley Dolan, Paul Fitzgerald, Chris Hall, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas, Chris Brown, Jo O'Hara and Joe Wharton

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

36. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors I Aldridge, S Buller, D Darch, H Davies, D Durden, A Govier, B Hall, M Hill, M Kravis, C Palmer, M Peters, F Smith, A Trollope-Bellew, T Venner, B Weston, K Wheatley and G Wren.

37. **Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council**

(Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 5 July 2022 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of Full Council held on 5 July 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

38. **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 | SCC, Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr M Barr | All Items | SCC & Wellington | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr C Booth | All Items | Wellington and | Personal | Spoke and Voted |

| | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|
| | | Taunton Charter Trustee | | |
| Cllr N Cavill | All Items | SCC & West Monkton | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr S Coles | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr T Deakin | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr C Ellis | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr H Farbahi | All Items | SCC | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr A Hadley | All Items | SCC | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr R Henley | All Items | SCC & Wellington | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr J Hunt | All Items | SCC & Bishop's Hull | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr D Johnson | All Items | SCC | 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 L Lisgo | All Items | Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr M Lithgow | All Items | Wellington | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr J Lloyd | All Items | Wellington & Sampford Arundel | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr D Mansell | All Items | SCC | 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 D Perry | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr H Prior-Sankey | All Items | SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr S Pugsley | All Items | SCC | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr M Rigby | All Items | SCC & Bishops Lydeard | 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 N Thwaites | All Items | Dulverton | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr R Tully | All Items | West Monkton | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr S Wakefield | All Items | SCC | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr D Wedderkopp | All Items | Taunton Charter Trustee | Personal | Spoke and Voted |
| Cllr L Whetlor | All Items | Watchet | Personal | Spoke and Voted |

The following Councillors further declared a personal interest on agenda item 15, as Trustees of the Albemarle Centre: Councillors Caroline Ellis, Richard Lees and Sue Lees.

The following Councillors further declared a personal interest on agenda item 12: Councillors Andrew Hadley, Andy Sully and Loretta Whetlor.

Councillor Sarah Wakefield further declared a personal interest on agenda item 13.

39. **Public Participation**

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

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

The Chair of the Council advised Councillors that nominations for the Civic Awards were due soon and advised that an email would be sent with further information detailed within.

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

The Leader of the Council highlighted to Councillors that there were several consultations open for feedback, they included the following topics:-

- Council Tax Support Scheme for the New Council
- Local Community Networks
- Somerset Panel for Members.

42. **To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

No questions had been received in relation to Procedure Rule 13.

43. **Constitution Update - Somerset wide Member Code of Conduct**

Resolved that Full Council agreed:-

- 1) To adopt the LGA Model Code of Conduct with local amendments (Appendix A)
- 2) That the revised Code of Conduct be incorporated into the Council's Constitution and would replace the existing Code;
- 3) That the Monitoring Officer developed and promoted Member update training to support the implementation of the revised Code of Conduct; and
- 4) That the adoption of the revised Code of Conduct continued to be promoted with Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) for adoption by Town and Parish Councils.

44. **Constitution Update - Procedure for dealing with Standards Allegations**

Resolved that Full Council agreed:-

- 1) To adopt the Procedure for dealing with Standards Allegations (Appendix A)
- 2) To adopt the revised Code of Conduct for Councillors complaint form (Appendix B)
- 3) That Appendix A and Appendix B be incorporated into the Council's Constitution and would replace the existing documents
- 4) That delegated authority was given to the Monitoring Officer to work with colleagues in the LGR governance workstream to determine when this would be introduced

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

Resolved that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the next items of business (Agenda Item 11, Appendix C only and Agenda Items 12 and 13) 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).

46. **Oake Woolaway Housing Refurbishments**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were pleased with the report and welcomed the work.
- Councillors were pleased to see good engagement had taken place with the tenants.
- Councillors praised the figures quoted in section 4.4 of the report.
- Councillors agreed the work was heading in the right direction for carbon neutrality.
- Councillors queried what the timings would be for the two properties due to be demolished.
The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that the two properties to be demolished would be carried out at the end of the process, as they would be used as part of the decant stage.
- Councillors highlighted that social housing was needed in the rural areas of the district and hoped that the planning process would not cause any delays to the project.
- Councillors queried how many of the properties were empty.
The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that five properties were empty and seven were occupied.
- Councillors queried whether the local Parish Council had been involved.
The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that the Parish Council had been consulted on several times throughout the project stages.
- Councillors requested clarification on the decant process.

The Assistant Director for Development and Regeneration advised that officers had learnt a lot from the North Taunton Woolaway Project and gave clarification.

- Councillors were happy to support the report.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 1) Approved the refurbishment and associated works for ten Woolaway homes at Oake which were currently classified as defective non-traditional dwellings.
- 2) Approved a Supplementary Budget as noted in Confidential Appendix C within the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, which was planned to be funded primarily through capital borrowing plus available capital grants.
- 3) Approved the delegation of authority to the S151 Officer in consultation with the Director for Housing and Communities to determine the final optimum financing arrangements for expenditure incurred.

47. **Asset Management Lease**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations within the Confidential Report.

48. **Heritage at Risk**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations within the Confidential Report.

49. **Re-admittance of the Press and Public**

50. **Motion to declare a Learning Disability Emergency**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillor M Barr left the meeting.
- Councillor M Blaker introduced the Motion as the proposer and Councillor L Whetlor highlighted the rights of communications on page 113 of the agenda, as the seconder.
- Councillors congratulated Councillor Blaker for bringing forward the Motion.
- Councillors were happy to support the Motion.
- Councillors agreed that there were too many barriers in place for those with learning difficulties.
- Councillors highlighted the work being carried out on trying to implement 'changing places' toilets within the district.
- Councillors suggested that the Motion should be taken to Somerset County Council.
- Councillors highlighted the impact that Covid had on those groups and that they had been at a massive disadvantage.

- Councillors requested assurance that the sentiments of the Motion would be carried forward into the New Council.
- Councillors agreed that the Motion had included some very stark information which they hoped would jolt the necessary action to be taken.
- Councillor Blaker thanked all for their comments and support.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 1) Agreed that reduced life outcomes for any section of the population were unacceptable and every member of our community had the right to a fulfilling, safe life.
- 2) Adopted the Communication Bill of Rights (Appendix 1) , with a written briefing to all staff and members, and copied to senior managers of all contractors providing public-facing services on behalf of Somerset West and Taunton Council.
- 3) Publicised this resolution via a press release from Somerset West and Taunton Council which would highlight key figures from the 2021 LeDeR report (<https://leder.nhs.uk/resources/annual-reports>) and promoted the value of the Communication Bill of Rights.
- 4) Committed to delivering a completed, functioning Changing Place Toilet in Taunton by the end of March 2023, with bi-monthly progress updates to members throughout development until then.
- 5) Agreed that the Leader of the Council would write to both Somerset West and Taunton area MPs, along with the Leaders of the other three District Councils and the Leader of Somerset County Council asking them to note the concerning data highlighted by the LeDeR 2021 Report and to raise awareness of the Communication Bill of Rights.

51. **To consider reports from Executive Councillors**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors K Durdan and C Morgan left the meeting.
- Councillors requested further information on Blenheim Gardens Café and the developments.
- Councillors reminded Portfolio Holders to consult with Ward Members on any activities taking place.
- Councillors requested an update from the Phosphate Sub-Committee.
- Councillors congratulated the work carried out to install electric charging points across the district.
- Councillors requested an update on the vacancies within the Planning Department.
- Concern was raised on the limited resource within the Enforcement Team.
- Councillors requested a member briefing on Single Homelessness.
- Councillors highlighted the disparity in locations included in the culture events update.
- Councillors R Henley, D Johnson, D Wedderkopp and S Nicholls left the meeting.
- Concern was raised on the findings from the litter enforcement trials.
- Councillors were happy to support and publicise the West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine Neighbourhood Plan.

(The Meeting ended at 8.20 pm)

