

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

The Council

Tuesday, 8th January 2019

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm Meeting Concluded: 7.40 pm

Councillors:

P David Jolley (Chairman)

P Reyna Knight (Vice-Chairman)

P Elfan Ap Rees

P Felicity Baker

P Karen Barclay

P Chris Blades

P Mary Blatchford

P Peter Burden

P Charles Cave

P Robert Cleland

P Andy Cole

A John Crockford-Hawley

A Bob Garner

Colin Hall

P David Hitchins

P Jill Iles

P Tom Leimdorfer

A Richard Nightingale

P David Oyns

P David Pasley

P Marcia Pepperall

P Terry Porter

P Kate Stowey

A Richard Tucker

P Martin Williams

P Nick Wilton

P Nigel Ashton

P Jan Barber

P Michael Bell

A Ericka Blades

P Peter Bryant

P Mark Canniford

P James Clayton

A Sarah Codling

P Peter Crew

P Donald Davies

P Judith Hadley

P Ann Harley

P Denise Hunt

P Ruth Jacobs

P John Ley-Morgan

A Jerry O'Brien

P Ian Parker

P Dawn Payne

P Lisa Pilgrim

A David Shopland

P James Tonkin

A Liz Wells

P Roz Willis

P Deborah Yamanaka

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Helen Bailey (Interim Chief Executive), Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Nicholas Brain (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Richard Penska (Interim Head of Finance), Andrew Burnett (People and Communities), Sue Efford (Corporate Services), Alex Hearn (Development and

Environment), Paul Morris (Corporate Services), Richard Turner (Corporate Services), Melanie Watts (Corporate Services) and Joanna Walker (Chief Executive Designate)

COU 78 Public Participation: Annette Foan, Local Resident – Recycling Waste around Weston-super-Mare (Agenda Item 1)

Ms Foan addressed the Council referring to the ongoing problem of recycling waste strewn around the Weston-super-Mare area. She stated residents were recycling waste, but current recycling boxes were not fit for purpose as, without lids, the recycling was blowing around the streets. She suggested this was an environmental disaster and proposed that additional litter pickers were required in areas beyond the Town Centre to clean up the streets. She provided photographs of the rubbish and bags of litter collected by residents in her local area and suggested the Council's contractors were not currently doing their job.

The Chairman thanked Ms Foan for her address and stated the matter would be referred to the relevant Executive Member. At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Bryant responded to Ms Foan, accepting that some of the problem was down to spillage but suggesting there were members of the public who continued to drop litter. He stated he would look in to the issues raised and asked Ms Foan to provide details of the areas she was concerned about so that finite resources could be targeted accordingly.

79 Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 4)

None

COU 80 Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 November 2018 (Agenda Item 5)

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

COU 81 Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman announced this would be Helen Bailey's last Council meeting and he thanked the Interim Chief Executive for her support to the Council during her time in post and wished her well for the future.

He reported on the Children in Care Awards at the Tropicana and said it had been a treat for him to attend and experience so many children and young people enjoying themselves and to have the opportunity to speak to the many dedicated Foster Carers and Children's Services staff.

He was pleased to report that following his request for support to fund tickets for looked after children to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs at the Playhouse, 84 tickets had been purchased for the show and he thanked all those who had contributed.

He advised members of two forthcoming dates for their diaries and asked members to confirm if they were able to attend, as follows:

Second opportunity to see Addactions presentation on Homelessness and Addiction – Wednesday 16 January at 6pm in the Rickford Room

Chairman’s Annual Civic Service – Sunday 10 March at 3pm at St Martin’s Church, Worle

**COU
82** **Leader’s announcements (Agenda Item 9)**

Councillor Ashton extended his thanks to Helen Bailey for her support, stating the Council had been extremely fortunate in securing an Interim Chief Executive of Helen’s ability. It had been a pleasure working with her and she would be missed. He looked forward to welcoming the new Chief Executive Jo Walker when she started in post on 14 January.

**COU
83** **Chief Executive’s announcements (Agenda Item 10)**

The Interim Chief Executive thanked the Chairman and the Leader for their kind words. She stated it had been a privilege and a pleasure to work with councillors and officers and thanked everyone for their support. She expressed her best wishes to the new Chief Executive and the Council for 2019 and beyond.

**COU
84** **Forward plan dated 3 January 2019 (Agenda Item 11)**

Councillor Ashton presented the Forward Plan.

Having regard to the comments made under public participation around resourcing of litter pickers to clean up the Weston-super-Mare area, a member referred to the commissioning of the Parks and Street Scene contract due for consideration by Council in February and expressed the hope that this matter could be addressed as part of that contract.

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

**COU
85** **Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report (Agenda Item 12)**

Councillor Knight presented the report from the Adult Services and Housing (ASH) Panel, highlighting the key topics considered by the Panel over recent months and key areas of focus going forward.

Councillor Porter presented the report from the Community and Corporate Organisation (CCO) Policy and Scrutiny Panel, giving details of the closed session of the Panel held on 28 September 2018 to look at policing policies in relation to household burglaries following the Council’s request for the panel to investigate the matter.

Councillor Willis presented the report from the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel (HOSP), drawing particular attention to the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group’s (BNSSG CCG) ‘Healthy Weston’ options for the future of health services in the Weston-super-Mare area. She referred to a statement issued by the CCG earlier in the day deferring the decision to commence public consultation until after its

Board meeting on 5 February to allow time for further modelling work. She suggested this may result in the Panel's January meeting being deferred to enable the Panel to consider the public consultation proposals. The CCG's revised consultation timetable would extend beyond purdah with the final proposal being considered by the new Panel after the local elections in May 2019. In the meantime the Panel would consider how best to represent the views of local residents and would continue to work with its partners. She drew members attention to page 13 of the presentation slides attached to the report and whilst the various models being put forward by the CCG may change following its Board meeting in February, she asked councillors to forward any comments on the proposals for consideration by the Panel at its next meeting.

In discussing the report members made the following comments: full support was expressed for Weston General Hospital and the importance of retaining a 24 hour accident and emergency (A&E) service within North Somerset; concerns were raised in respect of proposals to downgrade the hospital, particularly in view of the additional housing numbers proposed for North Somerset and the fact that the hospital also served residents in the north of Sedgemoor; the importance of providing high quality, safe and sustainable services to cater for the health needs of local people; the need to clarify that it was BNSSG CCG putting forward these proposals and not North Somerset Council, and to encourage local residents to engage in the CCG consultation process to safeguard the long term future of the hospital and the services provided; the role of the HOSP Panel in the decision making process and the need for clarity and transparency from the hospital and the CCG on the proposals including the business case, and for options to include a fully staffed 24/7 A&E service and not to be limited to the CCG's preferred outcomes; members gave accounts of their own personal experiences of the hospital's excellent A&E services and the importance of protecting these, particularly having regard to the distance to alternative A&E provision in Bristol and Taunton; challenges around the recruitment of clinicians at the hospital and options for addressing these.

Councillor Ashton proposed that the Council should clearly state its views at this stage as well as after the consultation process, and suggested a letter be sent to the NHS expressing cross party support for 24/7 accident and emergency services at Weston General Hospital and opposing any proposal that downgraded the hospital. He proposed enlisting the support of John Penrose MP in putting forward the Council's position and the expectation that the NHS would support the Council in protecting the future of the hospital.

Resolved: that the panel reports and the comments from councillors on the 'Healthy Weston' proposals be noted.

COU 86 Question Time (Standing Order No. 18) (Agenda Item 13)

Oral questions were directed to Members concerned and the summary notes and the topics involved are contained in Appendix 1.

**COU 87 Report and matters referred from the Executive – 4 December 2018
EXE 49 – Street Lighting – LED Replacement, Term Maintenance and
Highways Electrical Contract Award (Agenda Item 14)**

Councillor Ap Rees presented the reference from the Executive Committee.

In response to a question Councillor Ap Rees suggested parish councils may have the opportunity to buy into this contract and undertook to ask officers to provide a written response to members on this point.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Ap Rees, seconded by Councillor Bryant and

Resolved: that an application for loan funding be made to Salix Finance Ltd for the balance of the LED replacement costs of £4.2million or, if Salix funding is not available within the timescales required for the capital element (£4.2million) of this programme, the use of prudential borrowing be approved.

**COU 88 Reports and matters referred from the Licensing Committee – 6
December 2018
LIC 8 Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005 (Agenda
Item 16)**

Councillor Baker presented the reference from the Licensing Committee. She referred to the requirement for the Statement of Principles to be reviewed every three years and drew members attention to the summary of main changes to the existing document as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Ap Rees and

Resolved: that the revised Statement of Principles 2019-2021 be approved and adopted.

**COU 89 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and
questions relating thereto: Avon Fire Authority (Agenda Item 17 (1))**

Councillor Davies reported on the meeting of the Avon Fire Authority (AFA) held on 20 December 2018 and outlined the main issues discussed as follows: the budget for 2019/20; the new draft constitution; the draft service plan; the HMICFRS report. He advised that all reports were available to view on the AFA website.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

**COU 90 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and
questions relating thereto: West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee
(Agenda Item 17 (2))**

Councillor Blades reported on the last meeting of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November 2018 and outlined the main issues discussed as follows: the WECA Committee and Joint Committee forward plans; an update on transport seeking views and feedback from members; a progress report on the Metrobus programme; progress on work to develop a

Local Industrial Strategy for the West of England. All reports were available to view on the WECA website.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 91 Children's Public Health Services (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Barber presented the report. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Interim Director of Public Health outlined the options as set out in the report and sought approval to further explore these options and to start work on developing a new model for children's public health services based on measurable outcomes rather than service activity measures.

In discussing the report and the proposal to bring forward final recommendations for approval in the Autumn, reference was made to benefits of involving the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Children and Young People's Policy and Scrutiny Panel at an early stage. Reference was also made to the benefits of working closely with children's services to improve outcomes and to the importance of continuity of services and job security for those currently undertaking this work. The Interim Director of Public Health responded that the importance of collaboration between the services was recognised and he welcomed the opportunity to provide a panel briefing to discuss the options.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Barber, seconded by Councillor Pasley and

Resolved: that the changes to local commissioning arrangements for community health services be noted, and further exploration of different options to commission children's public health services be approved, final recommendations to be brought back to the Council in the Autumn of 2019 for approval.

COU 92 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Revenue Budget Update

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Interim Head of Finance presented the report.

At the invitation of the Chairman the Interim Head of Finance and Property updated members on the latest MTFP outlining the changes since the Executive report in December and the Government's financial settlement announcement. He referred to the next steps and timescales for finalising the MTFP and setting the budget and drew members' attention to the two alternative budget proposals put forward by the opposition groups as pre-circulated.

Councillor Ashton thanked officers for the update and referred to the pressures resulting from the late financial settlement announcement. With reference to the two alternative budget proposals put forward he advised there were some proposals he would like to adopt and stated all proposals would be looked at to see what could be accommodated. He confirmed the Executive would consider the budget at its meeting on 5 February and make recommendations to Council on 12 February 2019.

In discussing the report members raised a number of questions to which the Interim Head of Finance responded as follows: he confirmed no further financial announcements were anticipated but officers were working on the implications of the recent financial settlement; he confirmed the MTFP took account of areas of previous overspend and that growth figures had been built in where required but referred to the uncertainties around winter pressures; he agreed to provide additional information showing the movement of funds between directorates over recent years to give greater transparency.

Councillor Bell and, in Councillor Tucker's absence, Councillor Parker drew attention to their alternative budget proposals and thanked officers for the open and transparent way in which they had engaged with the minority groups at an early stage. They stated that every effort had been made to engage constructively in the budget process and thanked the Leader for agreeing to look at the proposals put forward. Councillor Davies confirmed that as there was no budget the Independent Group had not yet put forward alternative budget proposals, but he referred to the importance of addressing the inequalities across North Somerset.

In noting the proposal to retain the current Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 without amendment, concerns were raised at the absence of any analysis within the report on the impact of the previous decision to increase the minimum payment level. Reference was made to the fact that whilst Council Tax in North Somerset was one of the lowest in the South West, the minimum payment level was one of the highest and concerns were raised at the hardship this caused to the poorest residents. A member urged that further consideration be given to the scheme including possible mitigation measures.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Ashton, seconded by Councillor Ap Rees and

Resolved:

- (1) that the updated budget projections as at the end of December 2018 within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) be noted;
- (2) that the next steps and timescales for finalising the MTFP and setting the 2019/20 revenue budget, as set out in the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the two alternative budget proposals as presented to the meeting be noted, for discussion and consideration within the 2019/20 budget.

Chairman

Appendix 1

North Somerset Council Council Meeting, 8 January 2019 Question Time (Agenda Item 13)

Question 1

From Councillor Ley-Morgan

To Councillor Bryant, Executive Member for Waste, Streets and Open Spaces

Recycling

Councillor Ley-Morgan asked the Executive Member what happens to the materials that residents put out for recycling, where does it go and what happens to it when it gets there?

Councillor Bryant responded that following China's decision not to accept recycling many local authorities had been left in turmoil. He confirmed that all North Somerset recyclables were handled in this country, with the exception of glass that was sent to Portugal. He had a document from Biffa that explained how each of the various recyclables was dealt with and undertook to provide this to members.

In a supplementary question he asked when the Avonmouth plant visited last year would come on-stream? Would it handle recyclable material? What non-recyclable material would it be able to handle and was it intended that this facility would be 'sold' to other authorities and what would the estimated financial benefit be to North Somerset Council?

Councillor Bryant confirmed that the Viridor plant dealt with 360,000 tonnes per annum of refuse but not recyclables and generated far greater amounts of power than it took to run the plant. It was anticipated 320,000 tonnes would be handled at Avonmouth.

Question 2

From Councillor Bell

To Councillor Ashton, Leader of the Council

Car Parking

Councillor Bell stated that between Christmas and New Year he had read an interview with the Leader in the Mercury on the parking review, reporting that the Leader didn't agree with parking charges, was open to residents parking schemes and had never agreed to a cross party review. He asked the Leader if he could clarify those remarks.

Councillor Ashton responded he hadn't said that and stated there had been an officer present during the interview. He reminded Councillor Bell of the previous responses he had given on this matter, referring to the importance of getting the policy right in order to properly address the issues. He had sought the views of members from his group to agree the rationale and structure of the review but stressed the review itself would include all councillors. He reported that 40 responses had been received from town and parish councils to date and these were being collated before circulation to councillors and parish and town councils. He confirmed that additional officer time

had been allocated to ensure sufficient resources were available to progress the review.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bell asked the Leader if he would write to the Mercury to clarify the Council's position for the benefit of local residents and asked when the rationale and structure of the review would be shared. The Leader responded he didn't intend to correct inaccurate reporting in the local press and confirmed that the review proposals would be referred to the Strategic Planning and Economic Development Policy and Scrutiny Panel for consideration shortly before going out for wider consultation.

Question 3

From Councillor Canniford

To Councillor Ap Rees, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Planning, Highways, Transport, Housing, Economic Development

Signage Pollution

Councillor Canniford referred to signage pollution in certain areas such as Winterstoke Road and asked the Executive Member if he would look at undertaking a review to determine what signage could be removed.

Councillor Ap Rees responded that he was aware of the issue and asked councillors to provide him with examples of redundant signage within their wards and he would be happy to recycle the signs.