

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 23rd July 2019

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

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm Meeting Concluded: 7.55 pm

Councillors:

P Marc Aplin	A Nigel Ashton
P Michael Bell	P Mike Bird
P Steve Bridger	P Peter Bryant
A Gill Bute	P Mark Canniford
A Ashley Cartman	P John Cato
P Caritas Charles	P Caroline Cherry
P James Clayton	P Sarah Codling
P Andy Cole	P Peter Crew
P John Crockford-Hawley	P Ciaran Cronnelly
P Mark Crosby	P Donald Davies
P Paul Gardner	P Catherine Gibbons
P Hugh Gregor	A Wendy Griggs
P Ann Harley	P Karin Haverson
P Sandra Hearne	A David Hitchins
P Steve Hogg	P Nicola Holland
P Ruth Jacobs	P Huw James
P Patrick Keating	P John Ley-Morgan
P Stuart McQuillan	P Ian Parker
P Robert Payne	P Marcia Pepperall
P Bridget Petty	P Lisa Pilgrim
P Terry Porter	P Geoffrey Richardson
P David Shopland	P Tim Snaden
P Mike Solomon	P James Tonkin
A Stuart Treadaway	P Richard Tucker
A Richard Westwood	P Roz Willis

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Lucy Shomali (Director of Development and Environment), Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Nicholas Brain (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Richard Penska (interim Director of Finance), Emma Diakou (Corporate Services), Sue Efford (Corporate Services), Alex Hearn (Development and Environment), Paul Morris (Corporate Services), Rudy Taylor (Agilisys ICT)

COU 43 Public Participation: Jack Vanblerk, local resident – Plans to remove green fields from community open spaces near Brookfield Walk, Clevedon (Agenda Item 1)

Mr Vanblerk addressed the Council on matters relating to the removal of green fields from community open spaces near Brookfield Walk, Clevedon. He raised concerns in relation to the proposal to use this site for the Baytree School expansion and stated the Children and Young People's Policy and Scrutiny Panel at its recent meeting had agreed that other sites should be considered before a decision was taken. He suggested the site was unsuitable for a school given its proximity to the M5 and the associated air pollution, and referred the recreational importance of this site for local people. He urged the Council to give due consideration to the alternative options before proceeding with this proposal.

The Chairman thanked Mr Vanblerk for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Executive Member.

COU 44 Public Participation: Leonard Hurley, local resident – Public open space at rear of Brookfield Walk, Clevedon (Agenda Item 1)

Mr Hurley addressed the Council on matters relating to public open space at the rear of Brookfield Walk, Clevedon. He referred to his earlier address to the Council meeting in May 2019, stressing the importance of this recreational open space to the people of Clevedon and suggesting its proximity to the M5 made it unsuitable for a school site. He suggested the Planning and Regulatory Committee should visit the site to assess its suitability for a school.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hurley for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Executive Member.

COU 45 Public Participation: Jan Murray, local resident – Climate Change (Agenda Item 1)

Ms Murray addressed the Council on matters relating to climate change, congratulating the Council on putting this issue at the top of its agenda. With reference to the report on the agenda she suggested there was one critical issue missing, namely the recent planning decisions in relation to garden villages. She referred to the impact of these decisions in relation to CO2 omissions as a result of increased commuting, the non-viability of local bus services and traffic congestion at peak times. She suggested the additional housing required should be built closer to Bristol in the Vale and that climate change emergency should trump the small amount of green belt at stake if this area was to be developed for housing. She urged the council to re-evaluate the Joint Spatial Plan and address these issues.

The Chairman thanked Ms Murray for her address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Executive Member.

COU 46 Public Participation: Anne Bunn, local resident – Positive activism - encouraging better consultation with the community (Agenda Item 1)

Ms Bunn addressed the Council on matters relating to positive activism and encouraging better consultation with the community. She congratulated the new Council on steps taken so far in seeking public opinion via Facebook and welcomed the proposals for posting Council meetings on YouTube. She referred to the excellent work undertaken by many community groups within North Somerset and made particular reference to Extinction Rebellion Weston-super-Mare. She asked if the group could give a presentation to Council or one of its committees explaining the work they were undertaking and how best they could work together with the Council to address the climate change agenda.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bunn for her address. He suggested that she write to the Chief Executive to see how this could be best addressed.

COU 47 Public Participation: Robin Jeacocke, local resident – Quantitative aspects of the CO2 emissions objectives of North Somerset Council (Agenda Item 1)

Mr Jeacocke addressed the Council on matters relating to the quantitative aspects of the CO2 emissions objectives of North Somerset Council as set out in the climate change report on the agenda. A copy of Mr Jeacocke's address is filed on the minute book.

The Chairman thanked Mr Jeacocke for his address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Executive Member.

COU 48 Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 4)

None

COU 49 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2019 (Agenda Item 5)

It was noted that in the appendix on outside body appointments on page 19, 'Sara Codling' should read 'Sarah Codling'.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record, subject to the name 'Sara' being amended to read 'Sarah' in the appendix on outside bodies' appointments on page 19.

COU 50 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14) Re-wilding Programme (Councillor Catherine Gibbons) (Agenda Item 6)

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gibbons and seconded by Councillor Cronnelly

"NSC declared a Climate Emergency in February, and the new administration is committed to taking what actions it can to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In this context I would like to propose one of those actions - that NSC puts in place a re-wilding programme and actively seeks to identify as many areas as possible, of the verges, parks and open spaces it operates , where this can be done.

NSC should take the lead and help Towns, Parishes and community groups with their own re-wilding and tree-planting projects.

This will be beneficial in creating additional habitats for bees, insects and other wildlife and provide attractive “ wild” areas of educational value to the community.

These areas will be easy to maintain and send a positive message out to our residents that North Somerset is a forward-thinking, environmentally aware, eco- friendly region.”

Seven members signalled their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Gibbons spoke in support of the Motion outlining the benefits of implementing such a scheme.

In discussing the Motion members expressed their support for the proposal and the range of associated benefits. The following key points were raised: reference was made to the Blue Heart Campaign to promote the rewilding of gardens, parks, road verges and school grounds and it was suggested that the council should support and promote this campaign; reference was made to the importance of ensuring any re-wilding programme used native plants and natural seeding; the value of using local intelligence and setting up a district wide workshop to undertake a mapping exercise to provide greater clarity around who had responsibility for which areas of land; the need for better education and communication to explain what the Council was seeking to achieve and to encourage different attitudes to re-wilding and biodiversity across the district; the role of local councillors in working with residents, partners, schools and community groups to encourage local vitality and bringing together communities in support of biodiversity; the National Lottery Climate Action Fund and the importance of assisting local groups to access this funding.

In expressing her support for the motion Councillor Cherry proposed an amendment in relation to the use of glyphosates and asked that as a precautionary measure to protect health and biodiversity, the Executive Member be asked to set up a working group to consider the alternatives to glyphosates. She suggested this could be linked to the proposed new climate emergency working group.

In response Councillor Gibbons and Councillor Cronnelly as mover and seconder of the original motion agreed to take this proposal on board.

Councillor Petty as the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment confirmed she was happy for the alternatives to glyphosates to be considered as part of the work of the Climate Emergency Working Group. She also expressed her support for the Blue Heart Campaign.

Following further discussion, the amended Motion was put to the vote and it was

Resolved:

(1) that NSC declared a Climate Emergency in February, and the new administration is committed to taking what actions it can to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In this context it is proposed that NSC puts in place a re-wilding programme and actively seeks to identify as many areas as possible, of the verges, parks and open spaces it operates, where this can be done.

NSC should take the lead and help Towns, Parishes and community groups with their own re-wilding and tree-planting projects.

This will be beneficial in creating additional habitats for bees, insects and other wildlife and provide attractive “ wild” areas of educational value to the community.

These areas will be easy to maintain and send a positive message out to our residents that North Somerset is a forward-thinking, environmentally aware, eco- friendly region; and

(2) that as a precautionary measure to protect health and biodiversity, the Climate Emergency Working Group be asked to consider the alternatives to glyphosates.

COU 51 Leader’s announcements (Agenda Item 9)

The Leader wished everyone an enjoyable summer.

He congratulated his Liberal Democrat colleagues on the appointment of their new party Leader, Jo Swinson MP.

COU 52 Chief Executive’s announcements (Agenda Item 10)

The Chief Executive announced the recent appointment of Gemma Dando to the role of Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Management in Development and Environment. Gemma would be joining North Somerset Council from Bristol City Council in September.

COU 53 Forward Plan dated 3 July 2019 (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Davies presented the Forward Plan and responded to questions from members in relation to specific decision items. It was noted that entries on the parking review and the joint spatial plan would be added at a later date as and when any key decision was required.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 54 Question Time (Standing Order No. 18) (Agenda Item 13)

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

COU 55 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: Avon Fire Authority (Agenda Item 17.1)

Councillor Tucker gave an oral report on the Avon Fire Authority (AFA). He referred to the induction for new members on 12 June, the Annual Meeting on 27 June and the Constitution Workshop on 12 July and outlined the key issues addressed at each. He reported that Councillor Davies had been re-elected Chair for the forthcoming municipal year and Councillor Massey from Bristol City Council had been elected Vice-Chair. The Fire Authority had reverted to a committee structure comprising three main committees covering Performance and Audit, People and Finance, Strategic & Ethics.

The possible future relocation or re-build of Weston Fire Station had been discussed and he reported there had been three incidents within North Somerset within the last quarter, namely the lightning strike at the Children's Centre in Mendip Road, Worle, a fire spreading to neighbouring properties in Oldville Avenue, Clevedon and a wood store fire in Havyatt Road, Wrington.

It was requested that where meeting timescales allowed, written reports be provided to enable members to read reports in advance and ask questions at the meeting.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 43 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee (Agenda Item 17.2)

Councillor James gave an oral report on the meeting of the West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 17 July 2019. He outlined the key issues discussed at the meeting including the work programme and future agenda setting.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 44 Climate Change Emergency Motion Update (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Petty presented the report. She referred to the significant challenges in relation to transport and pointed out that the report did not include any data in relation to the M5 or air travel emissions. She reported that future reports and decision notices would include a section on the climate emergency implications of proposed policies and projects to highlight the climate change impact of the council's decisions.

In discussing the report members expressed support for the proposals and raised the following key issues: the need for clear timelines was recognised and it was noted that key actions would be integrated within the corporate plan; the type of light emitted by LED street lighting and concerns that this was at the blue end of the spectrum; the importance of clear information and education to achieve co-operation and bring about behavioural change, and the need for this to be incorporated within the plan including specific objectives for engaging with young people; the need for robust challenge in

relation to forthcoming council's decisions, and opportunities for re-visiting earlier decisions in order to address the impact on climate change; the challenges around transport and the need to include data in relation to emissions arising from the M5 and air travel from Bristol International Airport; the importance of engagement with the local community and key partners to ensure the council is working in partnership to achieve its goals; the need for national change to the planning process to enable climate change to be addressed as a material consideration.

In responding to the issues raised Councillor Petty undertook to work with the Director to develop robust measures to strengthen policies to seek to address the climate change emergency.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Petty, seconded by Councillor Gibbons and

Resolved:

(1) that the work undertaken since the Climate Change Emergency Motion was passed be noted;

(2) that the achievements that North Somerset Council has made in tackling climate change and efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions within the area be noted; and

(3) that the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and the Environment and the Director of Development and Environment be requested to continue this work, including establishing a working group with which to develop a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan.

COU 45 Yatton Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda Item 19)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report.

In discussing the report members noted the work of the Yatton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in reaching this stage in the process.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Tonkin, seconded by Councillor Bridger and

Resolved: that Council resolve to "make" the Yatton Neighbourhood Plan.

COU 46 Commissioning Plan for the Procurement of the Combined Reactive and Planned Maintenance, Minor Works and Compliance Testing Contract (Agenda Item 20)

In the absence of Councillor Cartman, Councillor Davies presented the report.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Davies, seconded by Councillor Canniford and

Resolved: that the commissioning plan be approved.

Chairman

Appendix 1

**North Somerset Council
Council Meeting, 23 July 2019
Question Time (Agenda Item 13)**

**Question 1
From Councillor Clayton
To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council**

In-house Services

With tendering processes for some council contracts about to start, Councillor Clayton asked the Leader if he was looking at in house options rather than lining the pockets of private companies that fail to deliver efficient service or pay a living wage to their staff.

Councillor Davies responded that his views on using in-house services were well known. He would like to bring services in-house wherever possible but stated the required infrastructure for insourcing had been destroyed. He also referred to the lack of information around central government funding which made such decision making extremely difficult.

**Question 2
From Councillor Codling
To Councillor Gibbons, Executive Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning**

Excellence for children's services

Councillor Codling stated that the Haywood Village Academy in the Winterstoke ward she represents had recently received an 'outstanding' rating by Ofsted, all the more impressive considering they have only been in existence for a couple of years. She asked Councillor Gibbons as Executive Member responsible for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, if she could offer a vision and reassurance that we aspire to excellence for all children's services, and for attaining excellence in lifelong learning, working alongside our Academy Trust partners and others.

Councillor Gibbons responded in the affirmative.

**Question 3
From Councillor Cronnelly
To Councillor Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment**

Biffa Contract

Councillor Cronnelly suggested that over recent weeks the Council had been continually let down by Biffa's sub-par service, and had been given excuse after excuse. He knew Councillor Petty was looking into this issue as a priority but noted that the current contract runs until 2024. He asked Councillor Petty if she could

assure him and members of the public that when this contract gets closer to its end date this new administration would consider all options including taking the waste and recycling service back in house.

Councillor Petty shared the concerns at the service currently received and the lack of contingency planning. She reported that a strategic governance meeting was scheduled with Biffa for later in the week to address current concerns and confirmed that at the appropriate time all options would be considered.

Question 4

From Councillor Gardner

To Councillor Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment

Environmental Strategy and breakdown of key measures

Councillor Gardner stated that Portishead Town Council has tasked a group of its councillors to work with the community on its environmental strategy. The Town Council welcomed the indication in the report that there would be an opportunity for working on this across the towns and district. Portishead would be putting together proposals and plans and he suggested one key to success would be to set up baseline measurements for each area. Portishead Town Council had been unable to find in the report a breakdown of key measures such as carbon emissions for any area more granular than North Somerset as a whole and given the congestion, over development and lack of integrated transport in Portishead, the Town Council would like to know more about how it compares within North Somerset as well as nationally. He asked the Executive Member if she would ask her team to work with all communities across North Somerset to provide all necessary data at granular level so that the related problems of climate change and a lack of integrated transport can be tackled systematically at town, parish and district level.

Councillor Petty responded that data sets were only currently available at district level but she was happy to look at how this could be addressed and to work with others.

Question 5

From Councillor James

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Support for LGBTQ residents

Councillor James referred to the Pride season celebrating the diversity of romantic, sexual, and gender identities in North Somerset. He reported that last week he had received a gift from a resident as a thank you for putting on an LGBTQ event in Portishead and he was excited that this Thursday the council would be flying the rainbow flag high in support of LGBTQ residents and marching in the Pride March this Saturday. He asked the Leader if North Somerset Council would further support LGBTQ residents by supporting LGBTQ Health Needs as outlined in Healthwatch's 2018 report, doing more to support LGBTQ adoptive parents and fosterers locally, and by removing the £345 rubbish disposal fee that the council charge to North Somerset LGBTQ Forum so the council didn't in effect charge them to combat prejudice and celebrate inclusion within our local authority.

Councillor Davies responded that he supported Pride Week. With reference to the rubbish disposal fee he stated this was lower than previously charged but was required to cover the costs to the Council and was in line with the charging policy for all such events. He added that Weston Pride made some charges to raise money for so it was not unreasonable to ask for funds to cover costs. He asked his Executive Member colleagues to respond to the other parts of the question.

Councillor Bell responded that he was happy to look at the Healthwatch report and work with officers on how LGBTQ Health Needs could be supported.

Councillor Gibbons responded that the Fostering Team would be at the Pride event and she was hoping that one of the LGBTQ foster carers would speak at the event. She referred to the valued service and the opportunities provided for everyone.

Question 6

From Councillor Payne

To Councillor Tonkin, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Weston-super-Mare Town Centre enhancements

Councillor Payne referred to the Weston-super-Mare Town Centre enhancements and was grateful that Councillor Tonkin and officers had met with ward members and others on site to consider the suggested changes to Alexandra Parade and Station Road. However, he was a little concerned that the detailed proposals shared at the site meeting were not included in the information published for the public consultation. He asked if Councillor Tonkin could explain how members of the public were expected to comment on these suggestions when they didn't know what they were.

Councillor Tonkin responded that the Civic Society had not yet been fully briefed on the proposals but stated he would look in to how these could be better publicised.

Question 7

From Councillor Cherry

To Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council

Brexit preparations

Councillor Cherry stated she was concerned about the possible impacts of a no-deal on the residents of North Somerset and asked what steps the Council had taken in relation to this to mitigate any impacts. She asked the Leader if he could arrange for a briefing to be sent to members on the council's Brexit preparations and what was being done to mitigate the effects of a disastrous no deal Brexit as soon as possible.

Councillor Davies responded that the council was unable to agree any policies as no-one had any idea as to the government's plans. He recognised the potential difficulties of a no-deal Brexit for EU citizens living in North Somerset, North Somerset residents living abroad and for goods and services but suggested it was beyond the council's remit to resolve this.

Question 8

From Councillor Willis

To Councillor Bell, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Blue Badges

Councillor Willis asked the Executive Member if he could explain why Blue Badge renewals were now taking six to ten weeks. She referred to a number of distressed residents now without a valid badge due to these delays and outlined the particular difficulties this was causing for some residents. She had thought the on-line system was meant to be quicker and easier but it was taking longer than the old service and furthermore on-line payments were creating difficulties for some residents.

In response Councillor Bell stated he would be happy to discuss the detail of the particular case referred to after the meeting. He referred to the changes to the administration of the national scheme aimed at streamlining the process but stated the technology was not currently available to support the new process therefore applications were taking longer. He agreed this was not good enough but suggested some of the problems were outside our control.

Question 9

From Councillor Keating

To Councillor Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment

Biffa Contract

Councillor Keating asked the Executive Member what other measures, alongside reviewing the contract with Biffa, the administration was taking to ensure the contractor fulfils its obligations and delivers acceptable service.

In response Councillor Petty agreed the service was not good enough and that she would push harder to get the best out of the service and find a satisfactory solution.

Question 10

From Councillor Jacobs

To Councillor Tonkin, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Response to emails

Councillor Jacobs referred to a number of emails she had sent the Executive Member in relation to roads in Wick St Lawrence and St Georges and asked if he could reply to her request.

Councillor Tonkin responded that he would be happy to reply but he had not seen the request.