

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 7 January 2020

held in the New Council Chamber, Town Hall.

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm Meeting Concluded: 7.30 pm

Councillors:

P David Shopland (Chairman)

A Richard Westwood (Vice Chairman)

P Marc Aplin

P Nigel Ashton

P Mike Bell

P Mike Bird

P Steve Bridger

P Peter Bryant

P Gill Bute

P Mark Canniford

P Ashley Cartman

P John Cato

P Caritas Charles

P Caroline Cherry

P James Clayton

P Sara Codling

P Andy Cole

P Peter Crew

A John Crockford-Hawley

P Ciaran Cronnelly

P Mark Crosby

P Donald Davies

P Paul Gardner

P Catherine Gibbons

P Hugh Gregor

P Wendy Griggs

P Ann Harley

P Karin Haverson

P Sandra Hearne

P David Hitchins

P Steve Hogg

P Nicola Holland

P Ruth Jacobs

P Huw James

P Patrick Keating
P John Ley-Morgan
P Stuart McQuillan
A Ian Parker
P Robert Payne
P Marcia Pepperall
P Bridget Petty
P Lisa Pilgrim
A Terry Porter
P Geoffrey Richardson
P Tim Snaden
P Mike Solomon
P James Tonkin
P Stuart Treadaway
P Richard Tucker
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), Sue Efford (Corporate Services), Paul Morris (Corporate Services), John Wilkinson (Corporate Services), Michèle Chesterman (Corporate Services)

COU Public Participation: Jan Murray, local resident – Withdrawal of Spatial 106 Plan (Agenda Item 1)

Jan Murray addressed the Council on matters relating to withdrawal of the Joint Spatial Plan. She referred to the fact that the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) had been found to be unsound by the Inspectors. Speaking on behalf of Churchill and Langford Residents Action Group and Churchill Parish Council she said that the major concern was that if North Somerset Council produced a Local Plan similar to the JSP and included remote strategic development locations such as Churchill/Mendip Spring, then the Inspectors would again find the Local Plan unsound. She asked for assurance that the new administration would ensure that planning officers started the proposed new Local Plan with fresh minds. She added that Churchill was a village 25km from Bristol with very limited employment. Churchill, she said, had already accepted a 35% increase in the number of houses – some 330 additional houses in a rural village of 880. In conclusion she referred to the award-winning 105 eco, social houses in 'Goldsmith Street' within minute of Norwich City Centre as an example for the Council to follow.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Murray for her address. The matter would be considered later in the meeting under agenda item 19.

COU 107 Public Participation: Stephen Watters, local resident – The Current Crisis in Residential Costs and Social Care, Social Prescribing & Community Funding (Agenda Item 1)

Stephen Watters addressed the Council on matters relating to the current crisis in residential costs and social care, social prescribing and community funding. He explained that he delivered creative engagement to people living with Dementia and their carers, both in residential care and in the community. He spoke about the North Somerset Dementia Friends (DF) 3000 Challenge which was a project running as part of the Culture Weston Arts and Health Festival on 3-5 April 2020. When the target of 3000 new Dementia friends had been met North Somerset would be the first unitary authority in the UK to reach the target set for it in the Prime Minister's Dementia Challenge 2020 and North Somerset would at that point become the most Dementia Friendly Community in the UK.

Over the weekend, dozens of volunteer Alzheimer's Society Friends Champions would be delivering DF sessions in every care home in North Somerset. Bath, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (BNSSG CCG) had agreed to fully support the project by providing access to doctors, nurses and health service workers hospitals, in health centres, offices and workspaces. He asked that the Council fully support this initiative which would enable the delivery of DF sessions in council offices and other council-owned places such as libraries and schools.

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

COU 108 Public Participation: Val Donegan, local resident – Homelessness (Agenda Item 1)

Val Donegan addressed the Council on matters relating to homelessness. She asked if there was a piece of land available at the Maltlands on which containers could be placed for the homeless. The goal was for homeless people to be able to grow their own vegetables and become independent. The project had been ongoing for two years and several businesses were on board to support it.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Donegan for her address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 109 Public Participation: Robin Jeacocke, local resident – Climate Change (Agenda Item 1)

Robin Jeacocke addressed the Council on matters relating to climate change. He referred to the local implications of global climate crisis and stressed the importance of acting now to arrest the change. He pointed out that the Council could decide to continue with the policies (as contained within the current Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) which had been rejected by the

Planning Inspectorate and located new population remote from employment or adopt a different approach to reverse this trend. He drew members' attention to documentary contributions to the JSP Examination. In conclusion he stated that a profound environmental crisis threatened and urged the Council to take local steps to help bring about the changes necessary to avoid this.

The Chairman thanked Robin Jeacocke for his address. The JSP would be Considered later in the meeting under agenda item 19.

COU 110 Public Participation: Juley Howard, local resident – The Need for Core Funding for Youth Services across North Somerset

Juley Howard addressed the Council on matters relating to the need for core funding for youth services across North Somerset. She explained that she was speaking as the Centre Manager of Clevedon YMCA to advocate for general youth services across North Somerset, although she was focussing on the work of Clevedon YMCA. The youth work at Clevedon YMCA was invaluable in offering a level of support to young people who would otherwise need to be in crisis to get any sort of statutory help. Whilst the work being done at Clevedon YMCA was very valuable she also thought that the work being done at the youth clubs across North Somerset was just as important. Despite North Somerset Council cutting all support to general youth services in 2011 youth work was recognised as important by the community and services were still there. Juley Howard explained that the development plan was to start a youth club next for young people with severe disabilities. Cuts had hit this group very hard and the start date was being delayed further and further into the future. She asked the Council to allocate funding for core costs for youth services and to set up a fund that local open access youth services could apply for funds. She urged the Council to fund professionally run youth services, that could prove the worth of what they were doing with targets that fitted in with the Council's aims to be a fair, open and green local authority.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Howard for her address. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU 111 Public Participation: Jakobus van Blerk and Son, Jacob, local residents – Public Open Spaces (Agenda Item 1)

Jacobus van Blerk and his son, Jacob, aged 9, addressed the Council on public open spaces. Jacob explained that Brookfield Walk, Clevedon was the only safe place for him and his friends to play where others could see them and they were able to play without their parents worrying. He knew other children needed the space but there was nowhere else to go. Jakobus van Blerk added that Brookfield Walk was currently a neighbourhood open space. East Clevedon was situated next to the M5.

Residents lived next to the noise and pollution but this was offset with the fact that the community had the fields and the benefits it brought to the community. He said that taking this away would remove a fundamental part of what the community was built on. He asked that the council should not remove this open space from the community.

The Chairman thanked Mr van Blerk and congratulated Jacob for their addresses. The matter would be referred to the relevant Director/Executive Member.

COU Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 4)

112

None

COU Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2019 (Agenda Item 5)

113

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

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)

114

Domestic Abuse Funding (Councillor Willis) (Agenda Item 6 (1))

Motion: Moved by Councillor Willis and seconded by Councillor Jacobs

“The government announced that extra funding will be made available (through the next spending review) to tackle the ‘postcode lottery’ to Local Authorities in aid of domestic abuse services under the LA’s obligation, and its legal duties based on The Care Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010.

1. Once extra funding is confirmed, I ask members to support the development of communication strategies, which set out in detail the support services available to those fleeing from domestic abuse and violent relationships, including:

Refuge accommodation/safe house provision and specialist support that covers safety through to independence; Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) outreach; non-gendered perpetrator and pattern changing family intervention services.

2. The provision should include services which can support survivors and children to remain in their own home whenever possible but recognise that not all survivors of domestic abuse and violence are willing or able to move area to access the essential life-saving support in safe accommodation, and ask that the relevant Scrutiny Panel investigate.

3. Council to lobby the government to change the ‘Women and Girls Strategy for Domestic Abuse’ title to recognise that domestic abuse and violence is not a gendered crime. To enable all victims to be recognised, the title should be changed to incorporate the words ‘All Victims and Children’.

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

In speaking in support of the Motion, Councillor Willis referred to her own experiences of supporting victims of domestic abuse, including a male victim who had been told to ‘man up’ by his friends and had later taken his own life. She stressed that domestic abuse was not a gendered crime and that strategies aimed at women and girls did not make access easy for all victims. She thanked all partnership agencies and the Council for their contribution towards services supporting victims of domestic abuse over the years for making such work possible.

Councillor Canniford expressed his support of the Motion. He would ensure that it was included in the new Contract for Specialist Domestic Abuse Support Services. He would liaise with Councillor Willis on the way forward when notification of the additional funding was announced.

Councillor Bridger offered his support for the Motion. As Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Panel he agreed to liaise with Councillor Willis to take forward.

Councillor Gibbons spoke in support of the Motion highlighting the lack of early intervention/therapy for perpetrators of domestic abuse in North Somerset.

Councillor James thanked Councillor Willis for her life-long work supporting victims of domestic abuse and also thanked partnership agencies for their valuable work. In expressing his support for the Motion he proposed an amendment to add the words ‘and North Somerset’s two members of parliament’ after the word government in paragraph three of the Motion.

In response Councillor Willis and Councillor Jacobs as mover and seconder of the original Motion agreed to take this amendment on board.

Resolved:

(1) that once extra funding is confirmed by the government to tackle the ‘postcode lottery’ to Local Authorities in aid of domestic abuse services under the LA’s obligation, and its legal duties based on The Care Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010, members support the development of communication strategies, setting out in detail the support services available to those fleeing from domestic abuse and violent relationships, including:

Refuge accommodation/safe house provision and specialist support that covers safety through to independence; Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) outreach; non-gendered perpetrator and pattern changing family intervention services.

(2) that the provision include services which can support survivors and children to remain in their own home whenever possible but recognise that not all survivors of domestic abuse and violence are willing or able to move area to access the essential life-saving support in safe accommodation and ask that the relevant Scrutiny Panel investigate.

(3) that the Council lobby the government and North Somerset's two members of parliament change the 'Women and Girls Strategy for Domestic Abuse' title to recognise that domestic abuse and violence is not a gendered crime. To enable all victims to be recognised, the title should be changed to incorporate the words 'All Victims and Children'.

COU Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)
115 Request on Behalf of Armed Forces Covenant Partnership – Planned Closure of Somerset Legion House (Councillor Willis) (Agenda Item 6 (2))

Motion: Moved by Councillor Willis and seconded by Councillor Harley

"I ask members to support my request, on behalf of the Armed Forces Covenant partnership of North Somerset Council, that NSC write a letter to the Royal British Legion asking that the RBL reconsider the planned decision to close Weston-super-Mare Somerset House Home on Beach Road from April 2020, with staff redundancies planned from end of February 2020.

This Council supports all serving personnel past and present, and under the signed Armed Forces Covenant as a partner, North Somerset Council has duty of care to this community.

The RBL Somerset House is a vibrant part of Weston-super-Mare Community and helps the town maintain its important links with the Armed Forces. It also is a big part of the economy and tourism for the town".

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

Councillor Willis spoke in support of the Motion highlighting the important role Somerset House provided for service personnel including family time after difficult tours of duty.

Councillor Canniford expressed his support for the Motion, noting that Somerset House was already closed ahead of its planned February closure. He expressed his disappointment that the Royal British Legion had made the decision without looking at alternative options such as introducing a minimal fee for those using the facilities as there was currently none.

Councillors McQuillan, Griggs and Shopland also spoke expressing their disappointment that Somerset Legion House was closed as these facilities were important to service men and their families.

Resolved:

(1) that the Council writes a letter to the Royal British Legion asking that the RBL reconsider the planned decision to close Weston-super-Mare Somerset House Home on Beach Road from April 2020, with staff redundancies planned from end of February 2020.

(2) that the Council supports all serving personnel past and present, and under the signed Armed Forces Covenant as a partner, North Somerset Council has duty of care to this community. The RBL Somerset House is a vibrant part of Weston-super-Mare community and helps the town maintain its important links with the Armed Forces. It also is a big part of the economy and tourism for the town”.

COU Chairman’s Announcements (Agenda Item 8)

116

The Chairman wished everyone a happy and prosperous New Year and hoped that all of their aspirations were achieved.

COU Forward Plan dated 3 January 2020 (Agenda Item 11)

117

Councillor Davies presented the Forward Plan.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU Question Time (Standing Order No 18) (Agenda Item 12)

118

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

COU References from the Executive

119 7 January 2020 – MTFP and Revenue Budget Update 2020/21 (Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Cartman presented the reference from the Executive.

He referred to the extreme financial pressures facing the council, with choices having to be made to cut services or raise revenue in order to balance the budget. He referred to the significant budget cuts that had already been made leaving little scope for further reductions. He stated the spending review in September had been better than expected but not sufficient to stop the need for difficult decisions. He reminded members that an all councillor budget briefing had been arranged for Thursday 9 January at 5pm. Finally, he stressed that the consultation was genuinely open and all comments received would be taken into consideration.

Councillor Griggs, Cartman and Gibbons welcomed and supported the comments made by the previous speaker, Juley Howard, who had spoken on the need for core funding for youth services across North Somerset.

Motion: Proposed by Councillor Cartman, seconded by Councillor Canniford and

Resolved: that the draft budget projects within the MTFP, as at December 2019, be noted.

COU 120 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto (Agenda Item 16)

Avon Fire Authority

Councillor Davies gave an oral report on the meeting of the Avon Fire Authority which took place on 18 December 2019. The papers were available for reference on the Avon and Somerset Fire Authority website and U Tube.

In discussing the meeting Councillor Davies referred to a visit made by a member of the Fire and Rescue Service to Gambia where three fire engines and equipment had been donated. The meeting had noted the sad death of a resident of Bleadon in a house fire in November. The meeting had also considered the impact of the Clean Air Zone and a Review of the Fleet (fuel, accessibility, narrow streets). In addition an update was given on the first part of the Grenfell Tower Enquiry with steps being taken to ensure the residents of high rise towers were looked after.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 121 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating hereto (Agenda Item 16)

West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee

The Committee had not met since the last Council meeting.

COU 122 Report of the Heritage and Regeneration Champion (Agenda Item 17)

The Chair thanked Councillor Crockford-Hawley (in his absence) on behalf of the Council for his work as Heritage and Regeneration Champion.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 123 Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21 (Agenda Item 18)

Councillor Cartman presented the report which recommended the approval of a Local Council Tax Support Scheme for North Somerset Council from 1 April 2020 onwards. It was proposed that the detailed framework of the current scheme remained unchanged. However, there would be a reduction in the minimum contribution payable by working age households from the current level of 27%, to a lower level of 24%, with effect from 1 April 2020. Councillor Cartman added that Councils were required to annually review

their own local scheme which had to be formally adopted by 31 January each year, enabling implementation on 1 April. The aim of the scheme was to make the system fairer supporting those individuals who were on lower incomes.

In discussing the Local Council Tax Support Scheme Members discussed the consultation process. Members informed that the scheme was publicised on the Council website and direct mail was used to communicate with stakeholders. Councillor Caritas informed members that a cross party group had been established to examine ways to improve consultation in the future.

Councillor Davies and Petty spoke in support of the Scheme.

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

Resolved: that the Council approved the change to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme as detailed in the report for 2020/21, which reduced the minimum contribution for working age households from 27.5% to 24.5%.

COU 124 West of England Joint Spatial Plan and Timeline for Future Strategic Planning (Agenda Item 19)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report which sought authorisation to withdraw the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) from examination. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 stated that a local planning authority may withdraw a local development document at any time before it was adopted.

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

Resolved: that the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) as submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 13 April 2018 be withdrawn under regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012 and in accordance with the section 22(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Chairman

Appendix 1

North Somerset Council Council Meeting, 7 January 2020 Question Time (Agenda Item 12)

Question 1

From Councillor Crew

To Councillor Petty, Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Environment

Summer Lane Flood Relief Scheme

Councillor Crew asked the Executive Member for an update on the Summer Lane flood relief scheme. He asked if Councillor Petty also inform him why, after officers had confirmed to residents that the scheme was fully funded by the Environment Agency, it had been delayed due to lack of funds.

Councillor Petty responded that she was aware that Summer Lane Flood Relief Scheme was well overdue for implementation. She was also aware that residents had struggled with previous flooding. She had been due to meet the Environment Agency in December 2019 but other flooding had delayed that meeting. She would ask the Director of Development and Environment to provide an update. She was also aware that the Community and Environment Services Manager was currently writing to residents of Summer Lane with an update on the Flood Relief Scheme.

Question 2

From Councillor Tucker

To Councillor Cartman, Executive Member for Finance and Performance

In view of the £18m budget funding gap the Council was facing over the next four years with little prospect of the newly re-elected government helping the Council to any significant degree and given that there was no ongoing financial settlement, Councillor Tucker asked how the Council would be able to protect front line services without having to resort to cuts and/or additional charging.

Councillor Cartman responded that there were extreme financial pressures facing the council, with choices having to be made to cut services or raise revenue in order to balance the budget. Significant budget cuts had already been made leaving little scope for further reductions. He referred to Appendix 3 of the MTFP and Revenue Budget Update Report (MTFP Risk Register) which highlighted the potential risks.

Question 3

From Councillor Haverson

To Councillor Tonkin, Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Councillor Haverson said she believed there was a current government consultation with regards to building standards, called 'The Future Homes Standard: Changes to Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations for new Dwellings'. This proposed quite modest improvements to house building energy standards. It also proposed limiting the power of local authorities to set

their own more ambitious standards. This worried Councillor Haverson considerably, not only with regards to the standards themselves, but also with regards to transferring yet more power from local authorities to central government. In view of the Council's climate emergency declaration and the current draft Local Plan etc, she asked if Councillor Tonkin could report on the response of North Somerset Council to this consultation.

Councillor Tonkin responded that the council will be submitting a robust response to the consultation (the deadline being extended to 7 February and a copy of the draft response was available if required). The council will also submit a joint response alongside the other West of England Authorities.

The response will detail:

- Whilst enhanced energy efficiency requirements to building regulations are broadly welcomed, they are not stringent enough and other changes proposed within the consultation must not be enacted.
- The West of England Authorities have evidence which demonstrates that higher energy efficiency/zero carbon standards are technically achievable and likely to be financially viable now. It is intended that these standards will go forward in the draft local plan for viability testing.
- This would not be possible, if the government (as per an option outlined in the consultation) removes the ability for local authorities to set higher energy efficiency standards than those outlined in national building regulations.

North Somerset Council will assert in its response that proposed changes would be a backwards step for many local authorities. Changes would both not align to climate emergency declarations but also not be consistent with the UK target for carbon neutrality by 2050.