

Draft Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 21st October 2020

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 2:30 pm Meeting Concluded: 5.28 pm

Councillors:

P Donald Davies (Chairman)
P Mike Bell (Vice Chairman)

P Ashley Cartman
P James Tonkin
P Bridget Petty
P Mark Canniford
P Caritas Charles
P Catherine Gibbons

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also in attendance: Councillors Nigel Ashton, Steve Bridger, John Cato, Andy Cole, Peter Crew, John Crockford-Hawley, Wendy Griggs, Nicola Holland, Ruth Jacobs, Huw James, John Ley-Morgan, Robert Payne, Terry Porter, Geoffrey Richardson, Mike Solomon, Richard Westwood

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Lucy Shomali (Director of Development and Environment), Sheila Smith (Director of People and Communities), Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Richard Penska (Interim Director of Finance and Property), Nicholas Brain (Head of Legal and Democratic Services), Vanessa Andrews (Corporate Services), Hazel Brinton (Corporate Services), Sue Efford (Corporate Services), Jenny Ford (Development and Environment), Bella Fortune (Development and Environment), Colin Medus (Development and Environment), Paul Morris (Corporate Services), Paul Paton (Development and Environment), Mike Riggall (Corporate Services), Melanie Watts (Corporate Services), Richard Turner (Corporate Services)

EXE Chairman's Welcome

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The Chairman welcomed everyone to this virtual Executive meeting.

He explained the procedures to be followed at the meeting and confirmed that decisions taken at this meeting would have the same standing as those taken at a physical meeting of the Executive in the Town Hall.

The Chairman reminded everyone that the meeting was being livestreamed on the internet and that a recorded version would be available to view within 48 hours on the North Somerset Council website.

At the invitation of the Chairman the Executive Members introduced themselves for the benefit of those in attendance and members of the public watching the meeting online.

EXE 31 Addresses by Members of the Public: Leigh Woods Parking Scheme - Ian Stoodley (ESO 6 as amended by SO 5A) (Agenda Item 1)

The Chairman drew members' attention to the written submission from Mr Stoodley, a resident of Leigh Woods, that had been published with the agenda papers the previous day. He proposed that the submission be noted and referred for consideration under agenda item 11 (Parking Review).

EXE 32 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda Item 3)

None

EXE 33 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2020 (Agenda Item 4)

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

EXE 34 West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr Davies reported that negotiations were ongoing for North Somerset Council to join the West of England Combined Authority (WECA). He undertook to keep members updated on progress and reminded members that ultimately this would be a decision for Council.

EXE 35 Forward Plan dated 2 October 2020 (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Davies presented the forward plan.

Resolved: that the forward plan be noted.

EXE 36 Ofsted Report and Draft Improvement Plan (Agenda Item 13)

The Chairman proposed a change to the order of the agenda and took item 13 next.

The Director of People and Communities presented the report. She reported that whilst progress had been made there were still areas requiring further work and she highlighted those areas requiring further improvement and the actions proposed within the refreshed Children's Improvement Plan to address them.

Councillor Gibbons stated it was her aim as Executive Member to make children's services a key focus of this council and suggested the Improvement

Plan provided an opportunity to do so. She referred to the positives within the report but stressed councils were entering a particularly difficult period nationally for children's services with reduced funding and additional pressures as a result of the pandemic. She expressed her commitment to lobbying the government to take on board the needs of children and provide proper funding to prevent an escalation of the current problems. She referred to the steps taken to increase the number of Corporate Parenting Panel meetings from three to six and to provide update reports on corporate parenting to each Council meeting. She welcomed the input from members but did not underestimate the scale of the challenge ahead.

In discussing the report the Executive wished to place on record its thanks to staff, agency partners and external supporters for their contributions. Members welcomed the external challenge that the expanded Improvement Board would bring, recognising the importance of collaborative working to bring about improvements and the benefits of clear priorities for officers and members. It was noted there would be regular engagement with scrutiny, reporting and feedback, and ongoing efforts to try and secure additional government funding for North Somerset schools and children's services.

Resolved:

- (1) that the Ofsted report and the initial Improvement Plan which has been submitted to Ofsted be noted;
- (2) that a further report be submitted to the Executive identifying the resources necessary to implement fully the Improvement Plan after the Plan has been accepted by Ofsted; and
- (3) that the internal and external scrutiny and challenge arrangements be noted and agreed.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 37 M5 Junction 21 Northbound Merge Scheme – Transfer of Funds to Highways England (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report and thanked officers for their work on this.

In response to questions raised Councillor Tonkin confirmed the proposal was for a full road construction scheme to relieve congestion during the morning peak period. He undertook to discuss options for requiring Highways England to use local contractors to undertake the work with officers, and to ask Highways England to provide details of carbon emissions associated with the capital works.

Resolved:

(1) that the Council enter a RIF agreement and draws down the £450,000 Revolving Infrastructure Fund contribution towards the scheme;

(2) that the Council enter a S274 agreement, whereby Highways England deliver the scheme on the Council's behalf; and

(3) that the Council transfer funds to Highways England to enable the scheme to be implemented.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 38 Pre-Consultation Sign-Off of North Somerset Active Travel Strategy in Preparation for Consultation (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Tonkin presented the report and thanked officers for their work on this.

Members welcomed the active travel strategy and the proposals for a 300% increase in walking and cycling and the associated benefits this would bring. Reference was made to the carbon literacy training undertaken by councillors and senior managers the previous week and it was noted that North Somerset was the first Council to have its councillors trained. Members thanked all those who had contributed to the training. With reference to the 'Bikeability' scheme Councillor Tonkin undertook to involve Councillor Gibbons and the two Youth Champions in promoting the scheme to schools and young people.

Resolved: that the Draft Active Travel Strategy document be approved for public consultation.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 39 Parking Review (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Canniford presented the report. He thanked officers for the comprehensive report and Councillor Cartman for his input as ward councillor for Leigh Woods. He referred to the recent impact on parking behaviours as a result of Covid-19 and the benefits of adopting a longer-term more structured approach to parking over the next 10 years. With reference to the extensive consultation undertaken he suggested the case for a parking scheme at Leigh Woods remained, with consultation comments concerned more with the detail of any scheme rather than the principle. In responding to the points raised in Mr Stoodley's submission presented earlier in the meeting he confirmed that the scheme did provide for visitor parking bays and added the scheme would

be reviewed after six months to allow for any modification as necessary. He stressed the case for improving the management of parking across North Somerset to provide a fair system still remained and that doing nothing was not an option.

Councillor Cartman thanked Councillor Canniford and officers for the work undertaken on the Leigh Woods scheme and recognised the difficulty in balancing the needs of all users whilst securing local support. He proposed an amendment to the recommendations in the report aimed at achieving a fairer balance between the three main user groups, seconded by Councillor Davies:

“With respect to the introduction of the Leigh Woods on-street parking scheme, additional restricted short term parking be introduced in the vicinity of the Church to better meet the needs of visitors and residents. These spaces would not be available for all day parking. Officers will work with local councillors and the Executive Member to ensure adequate short term provision is made in this regard, the final decision to rest with the Executive Member.”

In discussing the proposed amendment there was general support for its adoption. Councillor Canniford referred to the attempts that had been made to segregate short term parking from long term parking to avoid the potential for confusion and challenge, but agreed to take the amendment on board.

Further discussion ensued on the need for wider parking improvements and in particular the importance of progressing options for a residents’ permit scheme in Weston-super-Mare. In discussing the options reference was made to the following: proposed charges for residents’ parking schemes and the need to ensure fairness and affordability; options for reducing the cost of the first permit whilst recognising the need to cover the costs of administering the scheme and to discourage car usage; the benefits of adopting an holistic approach with an emphasis on integrated travel, aligning public transport routes to encourage car drivers to use the bus and reducing carbon emissions; frustrations that plans had yet to be progressed for a residents’ parking zone for Weston town centre and the importance of renewed emphasis on this to address the difficulties and unfairness for local residents particularly those living within the pay and display zone and surrounding areas affected by the displacement of vehicles; the recently endorsed active travel strategy and the importance of taking measures to discourage car usage; the need to work with local institutions such as Weston College to discourage car usage and encourage alternatives such as active travel or use of public transport.

It was noted that the Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Panel would be looking in detail at the issue of a residents’ parking zone in Weston town centre and it was hoped that proposals would come forward for consideration in the near future.

Resolved:

(1) that in light of both the consultation feedback and the Covid-19 emergency, it is agreed not to proceed with the January 2020 proposals in full at this time. Measures will be reconsidered as part of a longer-term approach to parking over the next 10 years;

(2) that the introduction of the Leigh Woods on-street parking scheme which includes pay and display parking charges and residents permits be approved. This scheme is an amended version of proposals previously approved by the Executive in October 2019 and January 2020;

(3) with respect to the introduction of the Leigh Woods on-street parking scheme, additional restricted short term parking be introduced in the vicinity of the Church to better meet the needs of visitors and residents. These spaces would not be available for all day parking. Officers will work with local councillors and the Executive Member to ensure adequate short term provision is made in this regard, the final decision to rest with the Executive Member.

(4) that the process including legal consultation be commenced to implement the introduction of on-street charges, waiting restrictions and residents permits for Leigh Woods. Following statutory consultation, the decision to approve and implement the necessary Traffic Regulation Order(s) along with final details will be taken by the Executive Member; and

(5) that officers be asked to evaluate options for residents parking permit schemes in areas where pressures already exist and to consider further appropriate parking restrictions across North Somerset (e.g. yellow lines/limited waiting restrictions) to address issues raised in the consultation.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE Economic Recovery Update (Agenda Item 12)

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Councillor Canniford presented the report and thanked officers for the economic recovery work undertaken since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. He outlined the projects in place to support economic recovery across the district and made reference to the benefits of the Visitor Economy Action Plan which would be regularly reviewed to ensure it was meeting its objectives.

In discussing the report reference was made to the ambitious commitments within the strategies given the current financial challenges facing the council and the need to ensure that funding opportunities were sought wherever possible and resources carefully prioritised and focussed in key areas for the benefit of local residents and the economy. Members welcomed the work being done to support and encourage small businesses across the district and supported the promotion of North Somerset as a tourist location with the associated economic benefits for the area.

Resolved:

(1) that the work undertaken in relation to economic recovery be noted: and

(2) that the Visitor Economy Action Plan be adopted.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 41 Budget Monitor Month 5 2020/21 (Agenda Item 14)

Councillor Cartman presented the report and thanked officers for their efforts during this difficult situation.

The Interim Director of Finance and Property outlined the projected budget forecasts and drew attention to the improvement in the revenue budget position since month 4 and the mitigations to address the overspends. He also summarised the position in respect of the collection fund and latest forecasts regarding council tax and business rate losses, reporting the government had indicated these losses would be spread over 3 years. He reported the latest position on funding from central government with further information awaited which would be included in future monitoring reports.

Resolved:

(1) that the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report be noted, including the likely impacts that the Covid-19 emergency response may have on the Council's overall financial position in the short and medium-term; and

(2) that the amendments to the capital budgets as detailed within Appendix 4 of the report be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 42 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Revenue Budget Update (Agenda Item 15)

Councillor Cartman presented the report. He referred to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit on projected financial positions both in terms of additional financial pressures and loss of income. He drew particular attention to paragraph 3.3.2 of the report setting out the MTFP budget process and referred to the importance of challenging transformation plans to see what long term savings could be made and to ensure value for money. He referred to the key themes being proposed and reported that an update would be presented to the next meeting.

In discussing the report reference was made to the importance of proper financial oversight and scrutiny as part of the MTFP process and the need for scrutiny to understand the challenges in order to engage with the budget discussion in a timely manner. Members welcomed the consultation approach set out in the report with the development of a Communications and Engagement Plan and identification of key stakeholders but it was suggested

consultation with elected members needed to take place before this wider public consultation to provide for meaningful engagement and an opportunity to influence the budget proposals. It was agreed that a meeting be held between Councillor Cartman, the Interim Director of Finance and Property and scrutiny chairmen and vice-chairmen to discuss the consultation timetable.

Resolved: that the updated information relating to the assumptions, risks and progress within the Medium Term Financial Planning (MTFP) process be noted, as well as the next steps and timescales for finalising the MTFP for the period 2021 to 2024 and for setting the revenue budget for the 2021/22 financial year.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 43 Executive Meeting Dates 2021/22 (Agenda Item 16)

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services presented the report.

Resolved: that the draft calendar of Executive meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal Year as set out in the report be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 44 Phase 1 Council's Land at Parklands Village: Contract Award for Developer (includes Exempt Appendix) (Agenda Item 17)

Councillor Cartman presented the report. He summarised the key elements of the procurement process and welcomed the high quality, sustainable and aspirational design of the proposed development. He thanked the Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Policy and Scrutiny Panel for their involvement in the process and agreed that in future, engagement with scrutiny at an earlier stage of the process would provide for robust challenge of commissioning and procurement plans and greater opportunity to influence final proposals.

In discussing the report members welcomed the proposals and expressed support for the imaginative, stand out development which encompassed the council's values and would be a flagship for North Somerset. In response to comments raised it was noted there would still be some opportunity to look at certain aspects the scheme via the reserved matters process. Members thanked all those involved in the procurement process for their work in achieving this excellent outcome.

Resolved: that the award of a contract for the development of Phase 1 of the Council's development land at Parklands Village to Keepmoat Homes Ltd., Lakeside Boulevard, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN4 5PL (company registration number 02207338) be approved.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman proposed a short comfort break.

[The meeting adjourned at 4.43 pm and re-convened at 4.55 pm]

EXE 45 Urgent Item: Somerset - Invitation for Single Tier Proposals (Agenda Item 19)

The Chairman proposed a change to the order of the agenda and took both urgent items of business (agenda items 19) ahead of item 18 (oral reports of Executive Members).

The Chairman drew members' attention to the urgent report that had been published the previous day. He agreed to accept the report as an urgent item of business, the reason for urgency being that the Secretary of State has required submission of any proposal by 9 November and thus urgent consideration of a response is required.

Councillor Davies presented the report and outlined the proposal from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. In discussing the report members agreed that North Somerset's economic and cultural links were with the West of England Partnership area rather than with Somerset.

Resolved: that the invitation from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government be acknowledged and a response issued advising that this Council does not seek to be included in any proposal for change within the Somerset area.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 46 Urgent Item: Organisational Restructure (includes Exempt Appendix) (Agenda Item 19)

The Chairman drew members' attention to the second urgent report that had been published earlier in the day. He agreed to accept the report as an urgent item of business, the reason for urgency being that changes are urgently required to the organisation's structure to implement changes which are

needed to continue the Council's response to the Covid pandemic and the recovery, as well as to respond to corporate priorities like the Ofsted action plan in a timely manner.

The Chief Executive presented the report. She outlined the background and driving principles behind the proposals for a revised management structure. Detailed proposals were currently exempt due to the sensitive consultations that had yet to take place with those officers directly affected but she undertook to update councillors and the wider organisation once those consultations had concluded.

Members thanked the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for the report. It was noted there was broad consensus for the direction of travel and support for the Chief Executive in progressing the restructure proposals.

Resolved:

(1) that the detailed proposals contained in the exempt appendix to the report be approved for consultation;

(2) that subject to consideration of consultation responses by the Head of Paid Service, the proposals be implemented with or without modification; and

(3) that the Head of Paid Service undertakes consequent actions including appointments in line with applicable policies and processes.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE Oral reports of Executive Councillors (Agenda Item 18)

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Councillor Tonkin reminded members that consultation on the Local Plan Choices and the Active Travel Plan started on 2 November 2020.

Councillor Bell referred to the increase in the number of Covid cases and thanked social care colleagues for their ongoing work in care homes and domiciliary care. He referred to the challenges of the coming Winter period and to the need to be mindful of how hard staff were working and in difficult circumstances. Whilst the number of cases in the last 7 days was still below the South West and England averages numbers were increasing and it was important not to become complacent. He reported that further guidance would be issued around Halloween and Bonfire Night but urged everyone to act responsibly and do their bit to keep case numbers low.

Councillor Gibbons thanked all staff particularly those in the social work teams and those working with vulnerable children. Whilst cases in North Somerset remained low many children across the country were out of school due to Covid-19 and she stressed the importance of taking all necessary measures to remain safe.

Councillor Petty thanked everyone who organised and attended the carbon literacy training last week and referred to the valuable ongoing work on carbon footprint reduction.

Councillor Davies announced that Councillor Charles was resigning from the Executive to take up a new engagement role in Bristol and, at the invitation of Councillor Davies, Councillor Charles thanked his fellow councillors and officers for their support during his time as an Executive Member. Councillor Davies then announced a number of changes to the Executive, referring to particular challenges for the Executive at the current time in delivering business as usual, including a range of major projects across the district, and also dealing with the impact of the pandemic. He was mindful of the need for resilience and as a result reported that, in addition to the appointment of Councillor Solomon to replace Councillor Charles as Executive Member for Communities, Tourism and Leisure, he was appointing two Assistant Executive Members to support the work of the Executive as follows:

Assistant Executive Member for Highways and Transport – Councillor Richardson

Assistant Executive Member for Community Engagement – Councillor Holland

The newly appointed members each thanked the Leader for the opportunity to serve on the Executive.

The updated Executive membership and the detailed portfolios for each Member are attached as an appendix to these minutes.

Chairman

Appendix

Executive Member Portfolios and Assistant Executive Member Roles

Leader – Don Davies

- External liaison including strategic partnerships; Local Enterprise Partnership, North Somerset Partnership, Joint Executive Committee (WECA and North Somerset Council), Alliance, Police,
- Strategic policy/Corporate Plan development, forward programme and strategic review
- Human Resources and Organisational Development
- Strategic Communications and Marketing (with Deputy Leader)
- Public and Home to School Transport

Deputy Leader of the Council, Executive Member for adult care and health – Mike Bell

- Adult Social Care
- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Public Health and Regulatory services
- NHS, Health and liaison
- Voluntary Sector liaison
- Emergency Management
- Housing

Executive Member for climate emergency and environment - Bridget Petty

- Climate Emergency
- Waste Services including Reduction and Recycling
- Environmental Protection including flooding
- Marine Environment
- Parks and green spaces including rewilding

Executive Member for economy and community safety – Mark Canniford

- Economic Recovery and Development including employment
- Business Engagement
- Regeneration of highstreets and town centres
- Community Safety

Executive Member for planning, highways and transport – James Tonkin

- Planning and Strategic Development
- Local Plan
- Building control
- Highways
- Strategic Transport and Active Travel
- Parking strategy

Assisted in the following areas by

Assistant Executive Member for highways and transport – Geoff Richardson

- Highways
- Strategic Transport and Active Travel
- Parking strategy

Executive Member for Children's services and lifelong learning – Catherine Gibbons

- Children and Young people's services
- Education and Skills
- Further and Higher education liaison

Executive Member for communities, tourism and leisure – Mike Solomon

- Libraries
- Culture strategy
- Visitor economy
- Leisure
- Seafronts
- Events
- Community engagement and consultation
- Town and parish liaison
- North Somerset Together

Assisted in the following areas by

Assistant Executive Member for community engagement – Nicola Holland

- Community engagement and consultation
- Town and parish liaison
- North Somerset Together

Executive Member for finance and performance – Ash Cartman

- Finance – revenue, capital programme and income generation
- Procurement
- Legal and democratic services
- Property and Asset management
- ICT, Digital and Customer Services
- Lead for Business Support contracts – Agilisys and Liberata