

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 23 June 2021

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.00 pm

Councillors:

Donald Davies (Chairman)

Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman)

Steve Bridger

Mark Canniford

Ashley Cartman

Bridget Petty

Mike Solomon

Apologies: Councillor Catherine Gibbons.

Officers in attendance: Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Jenny Ford (Head of Development) and Colin Medus (Head of Transport and Infrastructure).

EXE Chairman's Welcome

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The Chairman welcomed everyone to this face-to-face meeting of the Executive in the New Council Chamber. He explained that given the delayed timing of further Covid relaxation measures it had been necessary to limit the number of councillors, officers and members of the public attending in person, in line with current social distancing guidance. As a result only Executive Members and senior officers were present and all other councillors, officers and the public had been asked to view the meeting on YouTube. Councillors had been asked to submit any questions on agenda items in advance and these questions would be dealt with under the relevant agenda item.

This meeting was being streamed live on the internet and a recorded version would be available to view within 48 hours on the North Somerset Council website.

EXE Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO6) (Agenda item 1)

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the written submission received from a local resident on behalf of 'Ham Green Residents and their Supporters', on the Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Neighbourhood Plan

(agenda item 9) published as a supplementary paper. He proposed that this be dealt with later in the meeting under the relevant agenda item.

EXE 20 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda Item 3)

None declared.

EXE 21 Minutes of the meeting held on 28 April 2021 (Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman referred to the Executive Appointments on Outside Bodies (EXE 15) and the appointment of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Services to the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority. He proposed that this appointment, by designation, be amended to the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Engagement.

Resolved:

(1) that the minutes be approved as a correct record; and

(2) that the appointment, by designation, to the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority be changed to the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Engagement.

EXE 22 Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses (Agenda item 5)

The Chairman drew members' attention to the written question from Councillor Haverson to Councillor Bridger on major infrastructure projects that had been published as a supplementary paper and invited Councillor Bridger to respond.

Councillor Bridger thanked Councillor Haverson for her question and provided a detailed response to the issues raised. He gave assurances that major infrastructure projects such as the Banwell bypass and the A38 improvement plans were fully aligned to council policies, and this extended to council contractors too. He referred to certain constraints placed on the council as part of the funding package but stressed he wanted the Banwell bypass to be an exemplar. Opportunities for the creation of an active travel network linking local villages would be considered and it was noted that where certain objectives could not be delivered as part of these major projects they would be addressed as part of the local plan process.

EXE 23 West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda (Agenda item 7)

None

EXE 24 Forward Plan dated 2 June 2021 (Agenda item 8)

Councillor Davies presented the forward plan.

Members recognised the extensive work programme of the policy and scrutiny panels, in particular the Place Panel, and thanked all those involved.

Resolved: that the forward plan be noted.

EXE 25 Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Neighbourhood Plan (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Canniford presented the report, referring to the extensive consultation already undertaken on the plan which, with the Examiner's modifications, would now go forward to a referendum. He also made reference to the public submission presented earlier in the meeting. He thanked all those involved in the process which had been a real community effort and Councillor Davies, as ward councillor, echoed these comments.

Resolved:

(1) that the Executive accept the Examiners modifications to the Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the appendix to this report and resolve that with those modifications the Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions, is compatible with Convention rights and complies with the definition of a neighbourhood development plan and should therefore proceed to referendum; the referendum area to be the Neighbourhood Plan area, and

(2) that the Director of Place be authorised to make the necessary arrangements for the Referendum which will be held in the Abbots Leigh, Ham Green, Pill and Easton-in-Gordano neighbourhood plan 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 26 Joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Enhanced Partnership (EP) with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and Bus Operators (Agenda item 10)

Councillor Davies presented the report. He thanked officers for a comprehensive report and stated this was a major policy change and reshaping of public transport at both a local and national level. He referred to the opportunities for improving local bus networks as a result of increased national government funding, and to the recent all councillor briefing on this issue.

In discussing the report members welcomed the additional funding and referred to the importance of a fit for purpose local bus service if the public were to be encouraged to use it, with services that were affordable, safe and reliable. Reference was made to the ambitious timescale set by the government and the importance of allowing time to fully engage with stakeholders and partners in putting together a local Bus Service Improvement Plan.

Resolved:

(1) that approval be given to issue a joint legal Notice of Intent to prepare an Enhanced Partnership (EP) with WECA and bus operators, as required by the national bus strategy 'Bus Back Better'.

(2) that a joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) be prepared, in partnership with WECA and bus operators, and;

(3) that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) be prepared with WECA to set the terms of reference for the preparation of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and that this be delegated to the Executive Member (in consultation with the Director of Place and Assistant Director Legal & Governance). Further Government guidance on funding is awaited (expected 'Summer 2021') before the MoU can be appropriately detailed.

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 27 Draft Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024 (Agenda item 11)

In Councillor Gibbons' absence, Councillor Bridger presented the report. He summarised the key elements of the report and thanked officers for their work on the updated strategy and the scrutiny panel for its valued input. He referred to the consultation that had been carried out and the changes now proposed, as shown in the document by tracked changes. He confirmed there was overall support for the principles and the recommendations made. Councillor Gibbons had asked for any questions to be emailed to her for response.

In response to questions raised regarding direct consultation with schools, academies and the college, the Director of Children's Services advised this was undertaken via communications with all schools through the Council's internal Noticeboard communications, direct contact with non-school partners and through the Education Excellence Partnership Board (EPPB) which included representation from all those groups.

Resolved: that the draft Education Provision in North Somerset ~ A Commissioning Strategy 2021 – 2024 be approved, for implementation from 1 September 2021.

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 28 Adoption of Local List Nomination Criteria and Procedure (Agenda item 12)

Councillor Canniford presented the report. He referred to the benefits of having clear nomination criteria and an agreed procedure for adding locally important heritage assets to the North Somerset's Local List and thanked officers for their work on this.

Resolved: that the criteria and procedures within the North Somerset Local List management brief for the addition of locally important heritage assets onto the Local List for North Somerset 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 29 Budget Monitor Month 12 Out-turn Report (Agenda item 13)

Councillor Cartman thanked officers for a comprehensive and technical report and welcomed Amy Webb, Director of Corporate Services, to her first meeting.

The Director of Corporate Services gave a brief summary of the council's financial performance for the 2020/21 financial year, with the council delivering within its overall resource envelope and achieving a balanced budget. She referred to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the significant levels of additional resources from central government to address these challenges. She drew members' attention to the significant movements against the capital and revenue budgets as set out in the appendices to the report.

Councillor Cartman referred to the challenges of the past year and to the council's achievement in presenting a balanced budget position. He referred to continuing uncertainties facing the council over the coming year with rising adult social care costs, general inflation and limited opportunities for raising revenue via Council Tax increases. He drew members' attention to the changes to the capital programme, and referred to the huge investment in local communities, including additional funding for road maintenance and repairs.

In discussing the report members welcomed the additional funding for highways maintenance given the need for improved infrastructure to support the delivery of new homes, and particular reference was made to the significant and ongoing pressures on the adult social care budget with the following challenges to be addressed: additional funds for short-term stabilisation; a long term sustainable plan for adult social care; funding for innovation and delivery of a modernised system for social care.

Resolved:

(1) that the revenue and capital out-turn positions for 2020/21 as detailed within the report be noted;

(2) that the amendments to the revenue budget as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;

(3) that the general revenue reserve balance of £9.053m at 31 March 2021, and also the transactions to / from earmarked reserves as set out in Appendix 4 of the report be noted; and

(4) that the amendments to the capital programme as detailed in Appendix 6 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 30 Development Programme and Economic Strategy: Business Case and Commissioning Plan for development of Weston Business Quarter (Agenda item 14)

Councillor Canniford thanked officers for the report which set out the business case for delivering infrastructure and servicing of plots to enable commercial land owned by the council to come forward at the Weston Business Quarter (WBQ) in the Junction 21 Enterprise Area (J21EA). He referred to the strategic importance of the site and the increase in investment interest in this area. He confirmed this application was for the RIF, which would provide interest free forward-funding, with regular repayments to be funded through future land sales or lease income. This would provide new good quality jobs and increase Business Rate retention. He referred to written questions submitted by non-Executive councillors and responded to the points raised, referring to the importance of acting quickly to realise the benefits offered by this site and outlining the actions proposed to mitigate the risks.

In discussing the report members welcomed the proposals on this brownfield site in a sustainable location and supported the investment in quality businesses and employment generation to help address economic inequalities in the area. It was noted the proposals weren't without risk but offered the opportunity to deliver much needed jobs as part of the economic recovery in the area.

Resolved:

(1) that the Executive note and retrospectively endorse the submission of an Outline Business Case (OBC) to the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for £11.1m funding to deliver infrastructure and servicing of plots at Weston Business Quarter (WBQ);

(2) that the preparation by officers of a Full Business Case (FBC) for funding for the scheme be approved and authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Place and Economy to approve the submission of the FBC once finalised, in consultation with the Director of Place and the Section 151 Officer;

(3) that the council's revenue expenditure budget be increased to reflect the costs associated with the preparation of the FBC and to draw down funding from the

Driving Growth reserve; and

(4) that the proposed Commissioning Plan for the procurement of professional services and contractors to deliver the proposed infrastructure for this project within the accounts 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 31 Development Programme: Updates and Consultation Programme (includes exempt appendix) (Agenda item 15)

Councillor Canniford presented the report and thanked officers for their work on updating the development strategy sites ahead of public consultation. He referred to written questions submitted by non-Executive councillors and responded to the points raised, stating that the report set the parameters for public consultation as detailed in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.16 but that a robust consultation process would now follow.

In discussing the report members expressed support for the proposals which sought to create a balanced programme of development and investment that delivered the wider corporate objectives of the council. Members referred to the importance of achieving best value from the assets it owned and the need to clearly set out the broader objectives of the development strategy. Members recognised the importance of robust and open consultation and engagement to provide the opportunity for the public to make their views known, and for these views to be considered and responded to as part of future decision making.

Resolved:

(1) that progress on delivery of the Development Strategy sites be noted and endorsed; and

(2) that public consultation on the Development Programme within the parameters proposed in paragraphs 3.7 – 3.16 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 32 Oral reports of Executive Councillors (Agenda item 16)

Councillor Bell referred to the significant rise in Covid cases, particularly amongst the younger age group, which hadn't translated into increased hospital admissions but was a reminder that the virus was still present and of the need to continue to follow the guidance. There was a clear link between higher vaccination numbers and lower case rates and he encouraged everyone to get vaccinated, referring to

good local access to vaccination centres across North Somerset.

Councillor Davies congratulated those North Somerset residents who had been recognised in The Queen's birthday honours. Of the 18 Somerset residents honoured, seven were from North Somerset and he was pleased to see people who do so much for our community being recognised in this way. They were as follows:

Sue Turner of Nailsea, former Chief Exec of the Quartet Community Foundation received an OBE in recognition of her commitment to social justice.

Andy Tilden from Winscombe, former Director of Operations at Skills for Care, also received an OBE recognising his outstanding contribution to developing the skills and knowledge of the adult care workforce.

Adele Haysom of Portishead was awarded an MBE for services to education. Adele is chair of the Lighthouse Schools Partnership and has worked with schools and trusts across the South West to strengthen and develop governance best-practice.

Dr Tom Wells, also from Portishead, is an oncology consultant at Weston Hospital and received an MBE for his services to medicine and people with disabilities in the medical profession.

Emma Blackmore from Portishead, and Colin and Jacqui Payne from Weston-super-Mare were all awarded the British Empire Medal for their work during Covid-19. Emma has been a key member of the Portishead Coronavirus Support Network, a group founded last March to help residents to support each other and help elderly and vulnerable people during the pandemic. Jacqui and Colin are two of our shared lives carers and welcomed three people into their home last year to live with them during lockdown.

EXE 33 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any) (Agenda item 18)

None

EXE 34 Development Programme: Acquisition and Development of Weston Town Centre Sites (Exempt Report)

In order to consider the report in exempt session it was moved, seconded and

Resolved: that the press, public and officers not required by the Members, the Chief Executive or the Director, to remain during the exempt session, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that its consideration will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 Section 100I of the Local Government Act 1972 (that is, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person).

At this point in the meeting the livestream was cut and the meeting continued in private session.

Councillor Bridger presented the report and thanked officers for their work on this. Members welcomed the proposal for the purchase of brownfield sites in the town and the benefit of having control over the delivery of new homes to meet local need, with a focus on quality and affordable housing provision.

Resolved:

(1) that the potential purchase of sites in Weston Town Centre currently in the ownership of Homes England be approved in principle; and

2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery to approve the acquisitions, in consultation with the Director of Place and the Section 151 Officer, at a maximum cost as set out in the report.

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.

Chairman
