

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 8 December 2021

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 3.19 pm

Councillors:

Donald Davies (Chairman)

Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman)

Steve Bridger

Mark Canniford

Ashley Cartman

Catherine Gibbons

Bridget Petty

Mike Solomon

Also in attendance: Councillors Robert Payne (Assistant Executive Member), Mark Crosby, Terry Porter, Peter Bryant

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), Mike Riggall (Information and ICT Security Manager) and Ayesha Tinsley (Digital Apprentice).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Mike Bird, Karin Haverson, Sandra Hearne, Nicola Holland (Assistant Executive Member), Marcia Pepperall, Geoff Richardson

Officers: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Hayley Verrico (Director, Adult Social Services), Lucy Shomali (Director of Place), Simone Woolley (Customer and Digital Services Manager), Hazel Brinton (Democratic Services Officer)

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 public health recommendations to exercise caution and the Council's own health and safety advice, it had been necessary to limit the number of councillors, officers and members of the public in attendance in the Chamber to ensure the meeting could take place safely.

The option to join the meeting via Microsoft Teams was available for those members and officers who did not yet feel comfortable attending in person, and they would be able to partake but will not be “in attendance formally” and, if a Member of the Executive would not be able to vote or count to the quorum of the meeting.

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
64** **Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO 6)**

None received by the deadline.

**EXE
65** **Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)**

None declared.

**EXE
66** **Minutes - 20 October 2021**

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

**EXE
67** **Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Crosby addressed the Executive on the recent Carer Enquiry Day held by the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel to understand the impact of Covid19 on the carer community.

In presenting his report, Councillor Crosby drew members attention to the issues highlighted by those attending the day including the critical requirement for available resources and advice to be highlighted to carers and the number of informal, hidden carers unknown to the council. He informed members that there would be a report detailing the outcomes and actions required as a result of the Enquiry Day.

Councillor Crosby thanked those officers and panel members involved in supporting and participating in the event.

**EXE
68** **West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda**

None.

**EXE
69** **Forward Plan dated 3 December 2021**

The Assistant Director Legal and Governance noted the error involving the incorrect Executive Member against one of the items on the recently published Forward Plan and reported it had been subsequently corrected.

It was noted that Cllr Bridger would consult with the relevant panel chairman with reference to the Weston-s-Mare Transport Enhancement Scheme on the Forward Plan.

Resolved: that the forward plan be noted.

EXE 70 Approval of the Council's Digital Strategy

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Cartman reported on the Council's Digital Strategy to cover 2021-2024.

In presenting the report, he outlined the five key ambitions of the strategy which were to support residents in having a better experience when accessing the council's information and services; to provide an enhanced digital skill offer to residents; to allow communities to enjoy faster broadband connectivity; to support officers and members with access to continuously improving technology and to support enhanced collaboration with partner organisations. He noted that there were no direct financial implications arising from the Digital Strategy itself which merely provided the overall framework in which digital developments would be made

Members referred to the need to support those residents who are not able to digitally contact the council and for whom contact by telephone is still required.

Resolved: that the Executive endorsed the principles, aims and activities of the council's Digital Strategy for the period 2021 – 2024 and approved the adoption of the strategy.

Reason for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered:

As set out in the report.

EXE 71 Commissioning and Procurement Plan Approval - Alternative Learning Provision Framework 2022 - 27

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Gibbons presented the report.

In introducing the report, Councillor Gibbons outlined the current basis on which the council's Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) was purchased and the inherent risks attached to this method. She reported that purchasing through a framework or dynamic purchasing system would mitigate these risks.

She noted that Bristol City Council (BCC) was currently recommissioning its ALP to go live later in 2022 and that it was the council's intention to join this regional open framework with BCC and South Gloucestershire Council. She added that all providers would go through stringent quality control checks.

Councillor Gibbons outlined the basis on which the joint commissioning and management of the framework would be overseen via an inter-authority agreement.

Resolved: that the Executive approved the joint commissioning and procurement plan for the Alternative Learning Provision Framework 2022-2027.

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 2021/22 Budget Monitoring - Month 6
72**

At the invitation of Councillor Cartman, the Director of Corporate Services presented the report which provided a summary of the council's financial position after the first six months of the 2021/22 financial year and included details relating to key issues, known pressures as well as the potential risks that had so far been identified.

Members were directed to forecast budget pressures for the year end of £1.7m after £1.2m Covid grants. This included variances in Adult Social Services of +£1.2m due to the growth in care packages exceeding income; +£0.7m in Place Directorate due to lower parking income; -£0.2m in Children's Services due to fewer looked after children and a balanced position in Corporate Services and Public Health Directorates.

The Director of Corporate Services directed members' attention to Section 3.7 of the report and explained that there was an anticipated increase in forecast spend for a small number of capital projects, the largest of which was for the Winterstoke Bridge project. However, the increase would fall to the Ministry of Defence as the bridge was owned by them.

Resolved: that the Executive:

- (1) Noted the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report,
- (2) Approved the amendments to the capital budgets as detailed within Appendix 4.

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 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Revenue Budget Update
73**

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor Cartman presented the report and drew members' attention to the update on the cost pressures within the budget due to inflationary pressures and larger than expected increases in other costs such as the minimum wage. He added that there were proposals to close the funding gap which required ongoing conversations with officers and that the council was expecting the final settlement details from central government in relation to the Settlement Review. He noted that the council would work towards protecting front line services and aligning objectives to supporting the council's

Open, Fairer, Greener agenda.

The Director of Corporate Services outlined the next steps to be taken to achieve a balanced budget including officers working alongside Executive Members to consider growth and savings items. She confirmed that a full equality impact assessment would be made for each proposal.

Members noted that there was to be a briefing on the budget and proposals to the relevant scrutiny panel. The hard work of officers in bringing the budget into balance was highlighted alongside a request to consider innovative ways to meet the council's green agenda. Additionally, particular reference was made to the funding pressures in both Adult Social Services and Children's Services.

Resolved: that the Executive

(1) Noted the updated range of revenue budget projections and engagement plans within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as detailed within the report and

(2) Noted the process, next steps and timescales for finalising the MTFP for the period 2022 to 2025, and also for setting the revenue budget for the 2022/23 financial year.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 74 Oral reports of Executive Councillors

Councillor Bridger updated members on the delay to the Metrowest project and the significant financial and programme implications in the possible 6 month delay to the Development Consent Order by the Secretary of State. He added that the matter had been escalated to the Secretary of State by a letter from the council and a House of Commons debate and that the council continues to lobby for a timely decision.

Councillor Bell reiterated the council's advice in respect of behaviour because of the ongoing Covid19 pandemic and thanked all staff, the community and NHS for their continued support during this time.

At the request of the Chairman, the Assistant Director Legal and Governance updated members on the return to face-to-face meetings for scrutiny panels in the new year subject to ongoing developments with Covid19.

Councillor Davies expressed his thanks and appreciation to all including staff, contractors and councillors for their efforts over this extremely difficult year. On behalf of the Executive he wished everyone a merry Christmas and happy New Year and emphasised the importance of continuing to stay safe and to follow the guidelines over the festive period.

EXE 75 **Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)**

None.

Chairman
