

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 8 September 2021

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.15 pm

Councillors:

P Donald Davies (Chairman)

P Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman)

P Steve Bridger

P Mark Canniford

P Ashley Cartman

A Catherine Gibbons

P Bridget Petty

P Mike Solomon

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Councillors in attendance: Councillor Peter Bryant

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services) Lucy Shomali (Director of Place), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Mike Riggall (Information and ICT Security Manager)

Partaking via Microsoft Teams – Cllrs Robert Payne (Assistant Executive Member), Nicola Holland (Assistant Executive Member)

Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services), Hayley Verrico (Director, Adult Social Services), Alex Hearn (Assistant Director, Placemaking and Growth), John Flannigan (Community and Environment Services Manager), Frankie Mann (Active and Sustainable Travel Manager), Michèle Chesterman (Democratic and Electoral 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. 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.

The option to join the meeting via Microsoft Teams was being tried 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 36 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda item 3)

None

EXE 37 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 (Agenda item 4)

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

EXE 38 Forward Plan dated 1 September 2021 (Agenda item 8)

Councillor Davies presented the forward plan.

Resolved: that the forward plan be noted.

EXE 39 Contract Award for 0-19 Public Health Nursing Services and Healthy Child Programme (Agenda item 9)

Councillor Bell presented the report. He referred to the fact that Members would be aware that local authorities were responsible for commissioning public health nursing services for children aged 0-19 (health visitors and school nursing services). 0-19 Public Health Nursing services delivered universal and targeted services in line with the national Health Child Programme (HCP) to children and families from the antenatal period until 19 years with the aim of improving outcomes and reducing inequalities.

The current contract with Sirona Care and Health expired at the end of March 2022 and as a result of a procurement process Sirona Care and Health had secured the new contract which would run from 1 April 2022 for a period of 5 years with the possibility of a further extension of 2 years.

Councillor Bell referred to the wide range of services for children and young people aged 0-19 covered under the contract and the success of the programme. He thanked staff in the Public Health Team, Children’s Services and procurement for their hard work. Members looked forward to continuing to work with Sirona Care and Health moving forwards and providing the right kind of support and services that parents and families needed to give children and young people in North Somerset the healthiest start possible.

In discussing the report Members noted that there had been pressure across the health and care system in relation to the availability of appropriate staff and recruitment and retention was an important aspect of the proposals that Sirona

Care and Health had put forward. Members looked forward to working with Sirona Care and Health with a longer-term commitment over the 5 to 7 years and were hopeful to embed new ways of working to make the environment of North Somerset more attractive to potential recruits. Key to this was the monitoring process and members were assured of the good relationship between the public health team and Sirona Care and Health which would make this possible.

Members welcomed the fact that as part of the procurement process some climate change and environmental implications had been incorporated which was encouraging and a good sign that in partnership with health colleagues and other contractors the council's climate ambitions could be taken forwards.

Resolved: that the Executive approves the award of the 0-19 Public Health Nursing & Healthy Child Programme contract to Sirona Care & Health C.I.C (Company number 07585003. Registered office: Sirona care & health, 2nd Floor, Kingswood Civic Centre, High Street, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 9TR) for the period of 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2027 (five-years), with the option of a further two-year extension until end 31st March 2029 (seven-years). The annual contract value is £3,577,359 – with a maximum total value of £25,042,000 over seven years.

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 40 Approval of North Somerset Travel Plan SPD for Public Consultation (Agenda item 10)

Councillor Canniford presented the report. He referred to the fact that the council had undertaken a comprehensive review of the existing Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Members were informed that the current SPD dated back to November 2010 and required updating, particularly in light of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Members noted that historically travel plans had been included as part of the council's conditions but with very little enforcement or monitoring. The current proposal went further to allow developers to outsource the writing of those plans. It was proposed that an implementation service, paid for through S106 contributions would see the council carrying out some of that work if the developers chose to use the local authority. This would allow the council to help write the plans, charge the appropriate fees and also monitor travel plans in the future.

Councillor Bell encouraged members participate in the consultation and in particular drew their attention to the level of fees proposed in the consultation and the risk assessment.

In discussing the report members suggested the travel plans should be renamed green travel plans. Reference was made to the threshold of 40 being too high.

Members also commented on the size of businesses that needed to follow travel plans.

Councillor Davies urged everyone who had an impact on travel to respond to the consultation as it would set the future pattern for the organisation and more importantly for residents of North Somerset.

Resolved: that the draft Travel Plan SPD 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 41 North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy 2021-2031 (Agenda item 11)

Councillor Solomon presented the report. He emphasised the importance of the North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy being in place in terms of the council achieving its bids and grants and also for future generations to be able to access green space. He acknowledged the fact that the strategy was ambitious but that it was important to be ambitious in this instance.

At the invitation of Councillor Solomon, Councillor Petty spoke on the report. She welcomed the work that had taken place and the importance of having strategies in place to manage open spaces. She highlighted the importance of a document and a strategy being in place that reflected the ambitions of the organisation and recognised both the climate emergency and the nature emergency declaration. She referred to the importance of the engagement process including inputs from the Citizens Panel, town and parish councils and community groups. She noted that a long-term objective and strategy was required when increasing biodiversity and implementing changes to the natural environment which was why it was appropriate for this to be a long-term document.

Members welcomed the strategy and thanked officers for their hard work in bringing to fruition. Reference was made to the early engagement with the CCO Policy and Scrutiny Panel and the deep engagement that took place with local groups.

A discussion took place on the importance of urban tree planting, including encouraging new developers to plant trees and the development of wild life corridors which helped to protect and enhance species. Members also felt it was important that private domestic gardens were considered as a key element of green infrastructure. It was hoped that the strategy could be used, through the planning process, to ensure that developers, when designing gardens, encouraged biodiversity. Members were hopeful that the council would use the strategy to encourage people, where possible, to manage existing gardens well. The reporting process was also discussed including obtaining information on the state of nature in North Somerset.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Community and Environment Service Manager spoke. He informed members that the actions in the report were spread

across several teams in North Somerset over a ten year period. It was suggested that liaison take place with scrutiny panels to discuss the best way forward to achieving the targets in the strategy.

Resolved: that the Council adopts the North Somerset Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) appended to this 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.

EXE 42 Affordable Housing Delivery: Updates and Award of Grant (Agenda item 12)

Councillor Canniford presented the report providing an update on the delivery of affordable housing across North Somerset, including information on the Delivery Partnership with Alliance Homes. In addition, the report included information about the use of S106 commuted sums to support delivery of affordable housing by Registered Partners. Members were informed the report sought authorisation for a programme of grant awards to support the delivery of an expected 176 affordable homes at schemes in Weston and Portishead.

The critical need for such provision was highlighted with the average cost of a house in North Somerset being 9.47 times higher than the annual wage and the waiting list for social and affordable rented homes in North Somerset being about 2500 people and growing by 100 a month.

Councillor Canniford provided details on the new housing developments in Marina Gardens in Portishead and Diamond Court in Weston. He explained that the scheme in Portishead was particularly welcome due to the fact that there had been very little housing in Portishead for 20 years. The scheme at Diamond Court provided extra care which would also have a benefit the pressures on the budget. Both projects were very near completion which meant that new residents would be able to move into them quickly. He hoped the Council would whole heartedly support the proposals to bring new housing to much needed residents of North Somerset. He thanked the Head of Development and her team for the considerable amount of work that went into the report and also colleagues in the housing associations.

Members welcomed the report and noted the progress being made to deliver more affordable homes. The ambition to deliver 150 homes per annum was discussed and the fact that the housing needs register was rising by 100 a month gave a perspective on the scale of the challenge. Members noted the fact that house prices continued to rise and that for some this would be a good thing whilst for those trying to get on the housing ladder for the first time it was a major issue. Pressures in terms of the rented housing market were discussed and the critical need to deliver more homes, more quickly and investigate imaginative ways to do that. Whilst members felt it was positive that the council was investing its money, S106 funding and funding from the government into pump priming the supply it was felt that more could be done and members were encouraged to look at imaginative ways of putting more capital investment into affordable housing to

further stimulate supply.

Resolved:

(1) to note and endorse progress on delivery of affordable housing across North Somerset.

(2) subject to the schemes securing planning consent, and to the parties entering into contractual funding agreements (in a form agreed by the Director of Place and the Assistant Director Legal & Governance), to approve the following programme of grants to Registered Providers of affordable housing:

- £1,270,000 to NSAH (Alliance Homes) Ltd, for the delivery of affordable housing at Marina Gardens, Portishead.
- £495,000 to Housing 21, for the provision of Extra Care units at the Diamond Court scheme in Weston-super-Mare.
- £29,000 to Curo Places Ltd, for the delivery of affordable housing at Harbour Crescent, Portishead.

Full details of the Registered Providers are given in section 6 below.

(3) subject to the schemes securing planning consent, and to the parties entering into contractual funding agreements, to approve an increase to the council's overall capital programme of £1,794,000, to be wholly funded by Affordable Housing S106 commuted sum contributions as per section 5.

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 Acceptance of Community Renewal Fund (Decision in Principle) (Agenda item 13)

Councillor Canniford presented the report which set out the background of the Community Renewal Fund, provided information about the local assessment process, the submission of North Somerset's package of proposals to MHCLG and details of the successful award of funding to deliver these projects. Members were made aware that North Somerset Council was waiting to find out if it had been successful in the award of Community Renewal Funding. It had been anticipated that the council would be made aware of the outcome of the bid at some point in late August/early September. Officers were in regular contact with the government to ascertain the timeline for the announcement but there had been no announcement as yet. In order to ensure the council could mobilise its CRF activities as quickly as possible, the report sought a decision in principle to accept the funding should it be awarded.

Members were informed that the projects would invest in skills, local businesses and communities helping people to get back into employment or improve their employment. The CRF grants aimed to support responses to local challenges. North Somerset Council, with partners, had submitted a package of proposals.

Out of the eight proposals two had failed for not meeting conditions. It was reported that all proposals were taken through a strict checklist of conditions and that it had been a transparent process. Members were asked to make proposals or make organisations aware of those proposals.

In discussing the report Members thanked partner organisations involved and possible alternative ways of funding the projects if the funding was not received.

Resolved: that, subject to the successful award of community renewal funding, the Executive

(1) accepts the offer of funding of £2.87m from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG); and

(2) approves the associated amendments to the revenue budget as outlined in section 5.5.

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 4 (Agenda item 14) **44**

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 four months of the 2021/22 financial year and included details relating to key issues, known pressures as well as the potential risks that had been identified at this point in time. Members were informed that this was the first report of the new financial year and so efforts had focused upon material areas of the council's budget or those which continued to be impacted by Covid-19.

Members' attention was drawn to the Revenue and Capital Budget forecast for Quarter 4 July 2021 outlining the key elements of the budget totalling £177m for this financial year which also included an element of Covid support grant carried forward from the previous year of nearly £5m. The forecast for the year end was overspend of £2.299m. However, taking into account those Covid allocations from the grant of £1.181m, that brought the overspend forecast to £1.118m. Mitigations were being investigated in order to reduce that and members could seek comfort from the fact that the budget contingency was being held at this stage.

The Director of Corporate Services directed members' attention to the key drivers for the spend in each directorate. She referred to adult social care particularly around systemic pressures in numbers and needs for adult service users, partially due to Covid and mitigated through that grant but there were still remaining pressures. In the Place directorate, again, there was a significant impact on the sales, fees and charges income; Members noted that unfortunately, it had been confirmed that there would be no further compensation from central government for loss of income beyond the end of June 2021. There were also some significant pressures in Home to School Transport and that forecast would evolve now the school term had started and what those needs might be particularly for the special

education needs block.

Members were provided with an update on the earmarked reserves position. They were significantly higher for the year end 2020/21 due the Covid grants but those pressures were not going away in this financial year and there were ongoing cost implications and so a pragmatic view was advised in relation to releasing those over time. Finally, members were provided with information on the capital programme over the next 5 years which for 2021/22 amounted to £91m. There was some work going on to ensure that the Council aligned its capital monitoring activities and refined the forecast and in particular how financial risks were articulated back into that programme.

Councillor Cartman thanked the finance team for their work on the report and noted that it was good news with less than 1% variant on the four year outcome which was testament to the good work and culture and controls of the council. However, he stressed the fact that there were still a number of risks.

Resolved: that the Executive is asked to;

(1) Note the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report,

(2) Approve 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 45 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2022-25 Update (Agenda item 15)

Councillor Cartman presented the report which provided an update with regards to assumptions which underpinned the council's medium-term financial plan, covering the 3-year period to 2024/25, which was last considered by the Executive in February 2021. The council recognised the importance of aligning limited resources and allocating them to the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, which meant that it continually reviewed all aspects of financial planning and considered new risks, issues and challenges as they emerged. This was essential given the uncertainties, pressures and impacts which had arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In presenting the report, Councillor Cartman stressed the need to improve the consultation process and to consult with citizens and residents more frequently. This included parish and town councils and partners in the community to see what more could be done and this included members. He referred to proposals in the report to undertake this over the autumn period and he welcomed the involvement of Executive colleagues in this process.

At the invitation of Councillor Cartman, the Director of Corporate Services provided an update for members. She explained that the position was uncertain

and was a programme in development. It was slightly more promising for 2022/23 than had been thought in February 2021 but it would still be a challenge to find the efficiencies and transformations given the pressures faced. On the point of engagement, she directed members' attention to Section 3.7 of the report (page 342) which provided an outlined proposed engagement programme explaining how town and parish Councils and the citizens engagement panel would be used to inform wider consultation etc.

Councillor Cartman thanked the Director of Corporate Services and her team for their hard work on the report.

Resolved: that the Executive is asked to note;

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

(2) 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 and rejected:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

EXE 46 Oral reports of Executive Councillors (Agenda item 16)

Councillor Solomon provided an update to members on green waste and re-wilding. He referred to the fact that the decision had been made to suspend garden waste for two weeks. He explained that the waste teams in North Somerset had been under pressure for weeks and had done an exemplary job of working very hard to clear normal waste and garden waste but over the last week the Council had lost four drivers. As members were aware there was a national shortage of HGV drivers and the council was lobbying the government to see if it could be made easier for foreign nationals to return to the country and obtain work permits to help prop up the ailing transport system. Members were informed that it had been a difficult decision and it was understood that residents who had paid for the service would be frustrated but it was unfortunately beyond the local authority's control. The council would be investigating forms of compensation and over the next couple of weeks looking at options to clear the green waste. Members of the public could also still visit North Somerset amenities to drop off green waste or compost it (information on which was available via the website).

In terms of re-wilding, Councillor Solomon reported that the council was preparing to plant around 4,900 trees over the winter period bringing the total to 32,000 trees planted. This was below the anticipated 50,000 trees but there had been pockets of resistance to this. He informed members that conversations were taking place with these areas to ascertain whether the resistance was genuine or whether people viewed it as an excuse not to trim or cut the grass which was not the reason it was being done. There were two sets of volunteers engaged in re-wilding - North Somerset volunteers (400 in number) with 10 volunteers participating in

each session and the Re-wilding Champions Lottery Project which comprised a group of volunteers engaged in monitoring wildlife and witnessing the difference re-wilding was making to biodiversity in the district.

Councillor Petty reflected on the fact that across North Somerset there were more groups who wished to stand up, organise events and make things happen in relation to climate emergency. She referred to the recent festival of community of faith and of green issues 'Love Cleeve' which was a successful event discussing smart living. She also reminded members of the council competition 'Picture This'. Members would have seen it on social media or on the website and asked the question 'What could life in a carbon neutral North Somerset look like'. She urged all artists and creative folk both younger or older and school children alike to take time to pass on their thoughts and insights. That also tied in with North Somerset Arts week which was also coming back. Members were provided with an update on The Great Big Green Week (18 to 23 September 2021). It was described as a cross party, comprising many organisations, national run of events taking place around the country and there were community events in Clevedon and other areas. The week would be used to provide an update climate report at the full Council meeting and Councillor Petty explained that she would be hosting a Facebook live event where Executive members would be available to answer questions about their work on climate emergency in North Somerset Council.

Councillor Davies updated Members on events taking place in the Great Big Green Week across the whole of North Somerset. He also mentioned a Facebook Live event taking place at 6.00 pm on Thursday 9 September 2021 involving executive members which would provide an opportunity for people to ask them questions online. He thanked officers for their work over the summer. He noted that it had been quite a difficult challenging time with an autumn which would be equally as challenging. He also thanked the residents and businesses of North Somerset for having provided holiday fun for residents and people of the whole country to enjoy their vacations.

Chairman
