

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 20 October 2021

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.14 pm

Councillors:

Mike Bell (Vice-Chairman) (in the Chair)

Steve Bridger
Mark Canniford
Ashley Cartman
Catherine Gibbons
Bridget Petty
Mike Solomon

Apologies: Councillors: Donald Davies (Chairman) (partaking via Teams – absent for Covid related reasons).

Also in attendance: Councillors John Crockford-Hawley and Geoff Richardson.

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), Naomi Addicott (Senior Project Manager, Major Projects), Colin Medus (Head of Transport and Infrastructure) and Mike Riggall (Information and ICT Security Manager).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Donald Davies (Chairman), Robert Payne (Assistant Executive Member), Nicola Holland (Assistant Executive Member), John Cato, Karin Haverson, Huw James

Officers: Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services), Hayley Verrico (Director, Adult Social Services), Sue Efford (Committee and Support Services Manager), Melanie Watts (Head of Finance).

EXE Chairman's Welcome

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In the absence of the Chairman in the New Council Chamber, Councillor Bell, Vice-Chairman of the Executive, chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone to this face-to-face meeting.

In line with public health recommendations to exercise caution and the council's own health and safety advice, the number of councillors, officers and members of

the public in attendance in the Chamber continued to be limited to ensure the meeting could take place safely. Councillor Bell reported that some councillors and officers would be joining the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams, including the Chairman Councillor Davies, but explained whilst they will be able to partake they would not be “in attendance formally” and, in the case of Executive Members, would be unable to vote or count towards the quorum for the meeting.

The 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 48 Addresses by Members of the Public (Agenda Item 1)

None received by the deadline.

EXE 49 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda Item 3)

None declared.

EXE 50 Minutes - 8 September 2021 (Agenda Item 4)

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

EXE 51 Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses

None received.

EXE 52 West of England Sub-Region (Agenda Item 7)

None

EXE 53 Forward Plan dated 1 October 2021 (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Bell introduced the forward plan.

Resolved: that the forward plan be noted.

EXE 54 Update on the Development of a Joint Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) with the West of England Combined Authority and Bus Operators (Agenda Item 9)

Councillor Bell introduced the report and invited Councillor Davies to comment on it.

Councillor Davies referred to the disappointing announcement of further delays with the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the Portishead Rail Line and the increasing need for improved bus services across North Somerset and the wider area if the council was to meet its net zero target. He referred to the key aspects of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) as set out in paragraph 3 of the report, the likely timescale for developing the strategy and welcomed the recommendations as set out. It was noted that the BSIP was still a draft document which provided an indication of the key aspects but was subject to further

refinement and update.

In discussing the report members thanked officers for the excellent report and raised a number of key issues, to which the representative of the Director of Place responded, as follows: no changes were required to the BSIP as a result of the recent decarbonisation announcement regarding COP26 as ambitions within the Plan went beyond national targets; average carbon emissions per person for bus journeys (paragraph 7.1) were dependent on passenger numbers and as the use of public transport increased and buses were powered by cleaner energy this figure would improve further; the need for wider publicity around simple measures that could be taken to make car journeys more fuel efficient such as removing non-essential items to reduce the vehicle weight; the importance of delivering planned improvements to provide a frequent, reliable, co-ordinated and affordable public transport service in order to encourage the public to leave their cars at home; the inequitable impact of failing bus services and the benefits of cross-boundary work on the BSIP which was to be welcomed; the risks around potential loss of discretionary government funding and the need for a longer term financial settlement for bus services; the need to take measures to encourage a return to public transport post-Covid, including accurate and timely information in respect of delayed and cancelled services, and addressing safety concerns by improving bus stops where practical and looking at safe walking and cycling routes to and from bus stops; the importance of increased patronage to cover operating costs, and limitations on the size of vehicles given the need to ensure accessibility.

Resolved:

(1) that the work that has been done on the development of a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) be noted; and

(2) that the Leader of the Council, as the Executive Member responsible for Strategic Transport; Transport Policy, Public Transport, Home to School Transport, Bus and Rail Strategy, be delegated authority to approve the final version of the BSIP for submission to government by 29 October 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 55 Contract Award for the Design & Build (Stage 2) of the Winterstoke Hundred Academy Expansion (WHAE) (Agenda Item 10)

Councillor Gibbons presented the report. She referred to the key objectives of the school expansion project to deliver the capacity for at least 900 school places on the site, as part of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) (Forward Fund) bid, and to the consultation that had been undertaken.

In response to a proposal from Councillor Bridger that the delegation to the Director of Children's Services in recommendation (3) should be in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services & Lifelong Learning and the Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery, Councillor Gibbons confirmed

she was happy to take this on board. It was noted that the report had been brought to this meeting for approval to ensure the timetable for opening the school in September 2023 was not put at risk.

Members welcomed the report and the social value commitments to be delivered by Kier during the construction phase (Stage 2) of the project. In response to a comment regarding the need for numbers and quantifiable targets to be included within the paragraph on climate change and environmental implications, officers undertook to provide the detail on this in due course. With regard to the financial implications and confidence around the projected costs, reference was made existing cost mitigations in place and assurances were given that action would be taken as appropriate to mitigate against future cost increases.

Resolved:

(1) that the Winterstoke Hundred Academy Expansion (WHAE) Design and Build (Stage 2) contract be awarded to Kier Construction Ltd, Tempsford Hall, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2BD (company registration number 2099533), for a value of no more than £27.7m;

(2) that the capital budget be increased by £ 2.1m, funded by Section 106 contributions, to align the project to the values included within the original business case submissions; and

(3) that the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Children's Services & Lifelong Learning and the Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery, be authorised to enter into a final contract within the capped value, subject to acceptance of final due diligence detailed within 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.

EXE 56 Commissioning Plan for the Provision of In-home Lifts (Agenda item 11)

Councillor Bell presented the report. In response to a query regarding responsibility for ongoing maintenance costs he agreed to look into this and provide details in due course.

Members welcomed the proposal for preference to be given to tenders which included a clear process for the reuse and/or recycling of lifts.

Resolved: that the commissioning plan 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 57 2021/22 Budget Monitoring - Month 5 (Agenda Item 12)

Councillor Cartman introduced the report, and the Director of Corporate Services summarised the council's financial position after the first five months of 2021/22, drawing attention to key issues, known pressures and potential risks at this stage of the financial year.

Councillor Cartman thanked officers for a comprehensive and detailed report and recognised the dedication of officers across the council in addressing the Covid pressures and ensuring the council was not left financially exposed. He referred to ongoing work to address financial pressures and challenges in the usual key areas and reassured members that a prudent approach was being taken in working towards a balanced budget.

In discussing the report members raised the possibility of exploring whether the additional costs of the Weston Town Centre Enhancement Scheme as a result of unmapped utilities could be recovered from the utility companies, and to options for mitigating the shortfall in income from fees and charges as a direct result of the Covid pandemic.

Resolved:

- (1) that the projected revenue and capital budget forecasts as detailed within the report be noted; and
- (2) that the amendments to the capital budgets as detailed within Appendix 7 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 58 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Revenue Budget Update (Agenda Item 13)

Councillor Cartman presented the report, drawing attention to the update on resources and on service pressures and priorities as set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 of the report. He referred to the significant work required to bridge the budget gap and the limited room for manoeuvre but gave assurances that at all stages priority would be given to protecting frontline services. He referred to ongoing uncertainties and the approach being used to close the budget gap, and confirmed the council's commitment to consult and engage on the budget process.

Resolved:

- (1) that the updated range of revenue budget projections and risks within the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) as detailed within the report be noted;
- (2) that 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 be noted; and

(3) that the update provided in respect of the Government's proposals for Health and Social Care be noted.

EXE 59 North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (NSSAB) Annual Report 2020/21 (Agenda Item 14)

The Director of Adult Social Services introduced the report, referring to the role and work of the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (NSSAB). She introduced Tony Oliver, Independent Chair of the Board, who then presented the annual report 2020/21.

In presenting the report Tony Oliver referred to the overarching purpose of the Board to safeguard adults with care and support needs from abuse and neglect, by assuring itself that local safeguarding arrangements were in place as defined by the Care Act 2014. He outlined the core duties of the Board, highlighted the developments, achievements, challenges and areas for improvement within this critical area of work, and outlined the next steps for the NSSAB in seeking to become a more preventative Board. He drew particular attention to the marked increase in the number of cases of self-neglect and urgent action taken to evidence and respond to this, and referred to the importance of positive partnership working, giving examples of achievements in this area. He also referred to the need for a closer working relationship between the Children's and Adults Safeguarding Boards following changes in legislation, and asked councillors to use their influence to bring about closer co-operation between the two Boards.

Following his presentation, Tony Oliver then responded to questions from members on specific aspects of the work of the Board including the following: work to tackle exploitation in all its forms, the important role of key partners such as trading standards within this and the role of other agencies such as GWR in sub-group meetings to assist with specific areas; the dangers posed by social media and online gambling sites; the benefits of having a brief summary sheet of contacts and guidance around when and how to refer cases of concern; the benefits of training for partner organisations and options for sharing some training materials with councillors. He confirmed he was satisfied that adequate local safeguarding measures were in place and referred to opportunities for future improvement following the recent appointment of a business manager which would enable the NSSAB to look at and learn from national reviews by other Boards.

Councillor Bell thanked the Director of Adult Social Services and the Independent Chair of the Board for a comprehensive and informative report.

Resolved: that the NSSAB Annual Report 2020/21 be received, and the developments, achievements, challenges and areas for improvement in this critical area of work be noted, together with the future work of the NSSAB.

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 60 Draft Calendar of Executive Meetings 2022/23 (Agenda Item 15)

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer.

In discussing Executive dates for 2022/23 reference was made to the proposal prior to Covid 19 to hold meetings in different locations around the district and at different times to encourage wider public participation. Members welcomed the livestreaming of meetings which had improved accessibility and agreed it would be difficult in the current circumstances to meet at different locations. However it was proposed that consideration be given to holding some meetings in the evening, whilst seeking to avoid clashes with town and parish council meetings where possible.

Resolved: that the draft calendar of Executive meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year be approved, subject to holding some meetings in the evening to encourage greater public engagement.

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 61 Oral reports of Executive Councillors (Agenda Item 16)

Ravenswood School Update

Councillor Gibbons and Councillor Bridger updated members on the latest position at Ravenswood School following recent problems with water ingress at the site, reporting that works were on track for completion shortly to enable pupils to return after the half-term break.

EXE 62 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any) (Agenda Item 17)

None.

Chairman
