

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 12 April 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.27 pm

Councillors:

Richard Westwood (Chairman)
Karin Haverson (Vice-Chairman)

Nigel Ashton
Mike Bird
Peter Bryant
Gill Bute
Mark Canniford
John Cato
Andy Cole
Peter Crew
Ciaran Cronnelly
Donald Davies
Catherine Gibbons
Caroline Goddard
Hugh Gregor
Wendy Griggs
David Hitchins
Steve Hogg
Ruth Jacobs
Huw James
Stuart McQuillan
Phil Neve
Robert Payne
Bridget Petty
Terry Porter
Timothy Snaden
Mike Solomon
James Tonkin
Richard Tucker

Apologies: Councillors: Mike Bell, Steve Bridger, Ashley Cartman, Caritas Charles, Caroline Cherry, James Clayton, Mark Crosby, Ann Harley, Sandra Hearne, Nicola Holland, Patrick Keating, Ian Parker and David Shopland.

Absent: Councillors John Ley-Morgan and Marcia Pepperall.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Melanie Watts (Head of Finance), Vanessa Andrews (Marketing and Communications Manager) and Mike Riggall (Information and ICT Security Manager).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams: Councillors Marc Aplin, Sarah Codling, John Crockford-Hawley, Lisa Pilgrim, Geoff Richardson and Roz Willis.

Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Services), Sue Efford (Committee and Support Services Manager)

COU Chairman's Welcome and Reflection for the People of Ukraine

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The Chairman welcomed everyone to this face-to-face meeting of the Council in the New Council Chamber.

He reported that for members and officers who were unable to attend the meeting in person, there was an option to join the meeting via Microsoft Teams. This enabled them to partake in the debate remotely but they would not be formally 'in attendance', and members joining remotely would not be able to vote nor count towards the quorum of 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.

With reference to the agenda, the Chairman gave notice he intended to change the order of business for the meeting and to bring forward the climate emergency progress report (agenda item 20) for discussion after the minutes (agenda item 5).

At the Chairman's request, Council then observed a minute of silent reflection in support of the people of Ukraine.

COU Public Participation, petitions, and deputations (Standing Orders 2 (vi) and 115 17) (Agenda Item 1)

None

COU Petitions to be presented by Members (Standing Order No. 16) (Agenda Item 116 3)

(1) Loss of X2 Bus Service

Councillor Neve presented a petition on behalf of Congresbury residents with 353 signatories on the matter of recent bus service cancellations, in the following terms:

"The removal of the X2 bus service between Weston and Yatton will mean there is no service between Congresbury and other villages and Yatton, a huge loss to the local infrastructure. Villagers will be reliant on travelling by car to get to essential amenities such as doctors, dentists, vets, the station, schools, work and shops beyond those in the immediate vicinity, or a long walk which is not accessible to

many older people, those with younger children or those with mobility difficulties who may all already struggle with independence and be at greater risk of isolation.

There needs to be more focus on sustainable transport options for environmental reasons plus the rising cost of fuel especially with such limited transport options already serving rural areas. The X2 service is essential in ensuring local people can remain independent and connected.”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Neve and referred the petition to the Director of Place and the relevant Executive Member for consideration and response.

Councillor Davies, as the relevant Executive Member, responded that services were operated on a commercial basis and that bus passenger numbers were low. He accepted the reduced service was not as good but suggested there were still alternatives if passengers changed at Cleeve. Councillor Neve asked the Executive Member if he would raise the possibility with First Bus of extending the X2 service at least as far as Congresbury.

COU 117 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37) (Agenda Item 4)

None declared.

COU 118 Minutes (Agenda Item 5)

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2022 be approved as a correct record.

COU 119 Climate Emergency Progress Report (Agenda Item 20)

As announced by the Chairman at the start of the meeting, this agenda item was brought forward.

Councillor Petty presented the report, highlighting the progress made to date in tackling the climate emergency and embedding climate action across the whole organisation. She referred to the ongoing challenges of monitoring policy changes and climate actions against greenhouse gas emissions, and warned that while emissions continued to decrease, this was not at a fast enough rate. 43% of emissions were due to transport and current progress would not achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. She referred to the work being undertaken with the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and their updated Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, and to the findings of the West of England Transport Decarbonisation Study. It was clear that current measures would not achieve the desired results and that further investment was required to meet the challenges and bring about the behavioural change required.

Councillor Petty proposed an additional recommendation to those set out in the report, proposing that she, as Executive Member, and the Leader write to Government raising the council’s concerns on the lack of progress in meeting climate change targets. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Tonkin.

Members thanked the Executive Member and officers for the work undertaken to

date, recognising the huge challenges and the need for behavioural change in order to meet emission targets. Members welcomed the recent capital funding for bus services as a sign of the Government's recognition of the need for behavioural change, but stressed the need for additional resources to deliver further change to address the wider challenges. Members expressed support for the proposed letter and proposed wider signatories to the letter, including the Executive Member for Children and Young People and the Council's Youth Champions.

In discussing the report and action plan the following key points were raised: members expressed support for the proposal to declare North Somerset a Frack Free Zone to discourage the exploration and production of shale gas; the need to explore all renewable energy options was supported; the need to achieve the right tone in any messaging, recognising the steps taken by government to date and the importance of encouraging partnership working and wider participation with local communities in order to address the climate challenges; a recognition of the difficulties both locally and globally in measuring the impact of actions taken to reduce emissions, and of the importance of pushing forward with actions to measure outputs and value added, with a clear recognition of the co-benefits of carbon reduction such as improvements in wellbeing; members welcomed the work around EV charging points and highlighted the need for any strategy to address the requirements in certain rural areas where charging from home may not be an option; with reference to the level of imported gas from Russia, it was noted that some work had been undertaken around supply chains for oil and gas, and levels in North Somerset were significantly lower than in some neighbouring authorities.

On the Motion of Councillor Petty, seconded by Councillor Tonkin, it was

Resolved:

(1) that the progress with specific initiatives within the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan be noted;

(2) that the proposal for an update to the Climate Emergency and Action Plan update and comments from members be noted; and

(3) that the Executive Member for Climate Emergency and Engagement and the Leader write to Government raising concerns on the lack of progress with meeting climate change targets, the letter to be signed by other councillors as appropriate.

COU 120 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14): Remote and hybrid meetings - Councillor Bell (Agenda Item 6(1))

In the absence of Councillor Bell, Councillor Davies as co-signatory introduced the Motion.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Davies and seconded by Councillor Canniford

"That this council supports the petition launched by the Association of Democratic Support Officers and Lawyers in Local Government on 5 January calling for a change in the law to allow councils to meet via remote and hybrid meetings. We agree to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and

Communities calling on the Government to change the law to allow councils the flexibility to hold such meetings when they deem appropriate within agreed rules and procedures."

Seven members signified their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Davies spoke in support of his Motion, referring to the benefits of hybrid meetings for councillors, local residents and for the environment, and suggesting it was for local councils to determine how best to run their own meetings.

Resolved: that the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

COU 121 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14): Anti-Racism - Councillor Gibbons (Agenda Item 6(2))

In introducing the Motion, Councillor Gibbons welcomed the good work carried out since 2020 and highlighted the measures that had already been taken to raise the profile of race equality in the workplace. However there was more to be done and there was a commitment to take this forward.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Gibbons and seconded by Councillor James

"The Black Lives Matter Movement was set up in 2013 after the death of Trayvon Martin and subsequent acquittal of his killer. Global protests increased following the killing of George Floyd in June 2020, for which Minneapolis police officers were charged with second-degree murder (and aiding and abetting second-degree murder).

In 2020 peaceful protests in support of Black Lives Matter were held across North Somerset and throughout the UK. The aim of the protests was to demand change, bringing an end to the racism, discrimination and inequality experienced by black people. The movement strives for dignity, justice, and freedom.

Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often denied or unseen problem in the UK.

We have recently heard from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people living and working in North Somerset who confirmed that they too experience racism in North Somerset. Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete. This Council, representing people in North Somerset has a duty as a public leader to actively lead work to drive anti-racism. Thus:

This Council resolves as follows:

1. To stand together unreservedly with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic people in North Somerset.
2. To work to eradicate racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, Antisemitism, and discrimination which impact the entire community and blight our society.
3. To establish further initiatives to ensure North Somerset is actively inclusive

and anti-racist.

4. To ensure Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members of our community are involved in any reviews of our processes, policies and organisational attitudes, hold listening and engagement events seeking their views on the issues they face in North Somerset, and work with and support Community groups, youth groups, and places of worship in engaging with these issues.
5. To evaluate our progress against the Equality Framework for Local Government, ensuring race equality is at the heart of the review and produce an action plan addressing improvements identified, and the matters raised through our engagement with the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in North Somerset.
6. To provide training on race equality and what it means to be anti-racist, which will be mandatory for staff and expected for all councillors.
7. To recognise the rich cultural diversity of our employees and positively support their engagement in activity to address systemic racism wherever it occurs, and to make a commitment to work with organisations from the wider ethnic minority communities in North Somerset. (The recent Listening Event, was an example of a potential step in this direction.)

The council recognises that racial inequality exists, and we recognise our role in actively challenging it wherever it occurs in North Somerset. We make the commitment to implement these actions, through working with Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic members of our communities, and with organisations from the wider ethnic minority communities in North Somerset to effect meaningful change.”

Seven members signified their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Gibbons spoke in support of her Motion and Councillor James, as seconder, also spoke in support. Reference was made to the increase in hate crime, and in particular race crime, over the last two years and the importance of showing leadership in promoting equality and stamping out racial hatred. In debating the Motion members expressed support for this commitment and suggested it should be promoted across town and parish councils too. Members thanked those involved for the work undertaken and welcomed the collaboration and co-operation with the community and the inclusive approach that had been adopted. Reference was made to the benefits of the Listening Event and other initiatives in giving people the tools to challenge racism and make North Somerset a fully inclusive and anti-racist place to live and work.

Following further debate it was

Resolved: that the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

COU 122 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14): Great Homes Upgrade Campaign - Councillor Neve (Agenda Item 6(3))

In introducing the Motion, Councillor Neve referred to the poor energy efficiency of homes in the UK which were amongst the worst in Europe and were in desperate

need of upgrade.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Neve and seconded by Councillor Hogg

“Millions of families across the UK are struggling with steeply rising energy prices.

Too many children and adults are living in damp, draughty and cold homes, amongst the worst in Europe, due to decades of underinvestment and poor insulation.

Housing is one of the largest sources of carbon emissions in the country, making up around 14% of total UK emissions.

There is no path to net zero without upgrading our homes.

To meet the government’s own climate targets, we need to retrofit at least 19 million homes by 2030 and make all our housing low energy and zero carbon by 2050. To meet North Somerset’s target of net zero by 2030 the rate of change must be even faster.

This critical step on the path to net zero is a huge opportunity to improve peoples’ lives, finances and health and create thousands of good jobs across the country.

In October 2021 the Government released a Heat and Building Strategy, laying out the plans to cut energy demand and carbon emissions from homes and buildings, yet the financial offer was far less than promised in their manifesto. Under the Government’s plans we would barely scratch the surface in the time we have to avoid climate catastrophe.

Council resolves to:

Call on the UK government to implement a Great Homes Upgrade

Write to Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak and COP 26 President Alok Sharma highlighting the need to retrofit at least 19 million homes by 2030 to stay on track with their legal commitments and calling for the finance from the Treasury to unlock this.

Sign up to the Great Homes Upgrade campaign as a supporting organisation

Set up a local retrofit task force to help gather the evidence base, skills and expertise to kick start the process in this area. The work of the task force should include:

- A needs audit of local housing, identifying archetypes and appropriate retrofit interventions.
- Skills audit, identifying required skills and jobs.
- Partnership development with training providers and local enterprises that can deliver interventions.
- Partnership working with social housing providers and neighbouring authorities and other landlords
- Establishing a one stop portal for homeowners to access advice and

guidance on retrofit.

Share best practice and stories of retrofit success with the Great Homes Upgrade campaign and with the Local Government Association.

Write to neighbouring authorities asking them to join the campaign.”

Seven members signified their support for a debate on the Motion.

Councillor Neve spoke in support of his Motion. In debating the Motion reference was made to the proposal to set up a local retrofit task force and queries were raised as to whether there was current capacity to deliver this. Whilst there was full support for the proposals in principle, it was recognised that implementation would need to be subject to further discussions with the appropriate Director and Finance colleagues around capacity and resourcing. Members referred to the urgency of the current situation and the need to take measures to resolve these issues now. It was suggested that setting up a working group to address this may be the best way forward, and reference was made to the ongoing problems of ensuring current housebuilding met the required energy standards.

Councillor Neve and Councillor Hogg, as mover and seconder of the Motion, agreed to take on board the amendment for the proposals to be subject to further discussions with officers around capacity to deliver the proposals.

Following further debate it was

Resolved: that, subject to further discussions with the appropriate Director and Finance colleagues around capacity to deliver the proposals, the Motion as set out in full above be approved and adopted.

COU 123 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14): Member Code of Conduct - Councillor Charles (Agenda Item 6(4))

The Chairman announced that Councillor Charles was not in attendance and had asked for his Motion to be deferred until the next meeting.

The Motion was therefore withdrawn from this agenda.

COU 124 Matters referred from previous meeting (Agenda Item 7)

None

COU 125 Chairman's announcements (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman announced he would be hosting a North Somerset Ukrainian Support evening at the Town Hall on Monday 9 May. Invitations would be sent out shortly.

COU 126 Leader's announcements (Agenda Item 9)

The Leader noted this would be the last meeting chaired by Councillor Westwood and thanked Councillor Westwood for his chairmanship. He wished everyone a

Happy Easter and extended wider festival greetings to all.

COU Chief Executive's announcements (Agenda Item 10)

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None

COU Political Balance Update (Agenda Item 11)

128

The Assistant Director, Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer reported that Councillor Goddard had resigned from the Independent Group and was now a member of no political group. He reported that political balance was as follows:

Independent 15: Conservative 13: Liberal Democrat 10: Labour 6: Green 4:
No Political Group 2

The change to political balance on the Council also resulted in a change on committee and panel sizes of 16 and 11 and group leaders were asked to notify Democratic Services of their nomination changes in the usual way.

COU Forward Plan dated 1 April 2022 (Agenda Item 12)

129

The Leader presented the Forward Plan.

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

COU Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report (Agenda Item 13)

130

None

COU Corporate Parenting Report (Agenda Item 14)

131

It was noted there was no report on this occasion. Councillor Gibbons reported that Bethany Evans, the new Young Director, had been unable to attend today's meeting but hoped to come to a future meeting.

COU Question Time (Standing Order No.18) (Agenda Item 15)

132

Oral questions were directed to members concerned and the summary notes and topics involved are contained in Appendix 1.

COU Reports and matters referred from the Executive (Agenda Item 16)

133

None

COU Reports and matters referred from the Policy/Overview and Scrutiny Panels other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda (Agenda Item 17)

134

None

COU Reports and matters referred from the other Committees other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda (Agenda Item 18)

135

Licensing Committee, 14 March 2022: LIC 6 End of Year Report for the Administration and Enforcement of all Licensing Regimes

Councillor Cole, as Chairman of the Licensing Committee, presented the reference, drawing particular attention to the consultation responses and the key issues within the report . In discussing the report reference was made to issues around protection from harm and the need for existing licensing and gambling legislation to be updated to provide for enforcement of 21st century activities.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Cole, seconded by Councillor Tonkin and

Resolved: that the revised Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003 and the revised Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005 be adopted.

COU 136 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (Agenda item (19 (2)))

Councillor Crew presented his report, highlighting the key issues and responding to questions from members. In response to a request for the matter of understaffing in North Somerset to be raised at the next Police and Crime Panel meeting, Councillor Crew reported that North Somerset would be the first authority to see the new police and crime teams in operation, starting in Weston and then spreading across North Somerset before being extended to other areas.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

COU 137 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto: West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Joint Scrutiny Committee (Agenda item 19 (3))

Councillor James confirmed there had been a recent meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Committee which had considered the LEP Annual Report and the Governance Review.

The Chairman reminded members of the request for written reports and asked Councillor James to submit a written report to the next Council meeting.

COU 138 Designation of the Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2022/23 (Agenda Item 21)

Motion: Moved by Councillor Petty, seconded by Councillor Gibbons and

Resolved: that Councillor Haverson be designated for election as the Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

COU 139 Designation of the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Municipal Year 2022/23 (Agenda Item 22)

Motion: Moved by Councillor Canniford, seconded by Councillor Payne and

Resolved: that Councillor Griggs be designated for election as the Vice-Chairman

of the Council for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

**COU 140 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)
(Agenda Item 23)**

None

Chairman
