

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Council

Tuesday, 11 July 2023

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.29 pm

Councillors:

Wendy Griggs (Chairperson)

Peter Crew (Vice-Chairperson)

Marc Aplin

Nigel Ashton

Mike Bell

Christopher Blades

Steve Bridger

Peter Bryant

Peter Burden

Ashley Cartman

Annabelle Chard

James Clayton

Andy Cole

Jemma Coles

Ciaran Cronnelly

Stuart Davies

Oliver Ellis

Catherine Gibbons

Jenna Ho Marris

Nicola Holland

Clare Hunt

Patrick Keating

Sue Mason

Hugh Malyan

Stuart McQuillan

Robert Payne

Marcia Pepperall

Bridget Petty

Lisa Pilgrim

Terry Porter

Michael Pryke

Luke Smith

Timothy Snaden

Mike Solomon

Dan Thomas

Helen Thornton
Joe Tristram
Richard Tucker
Annemieke Waite
Roger Whitfield
Martin Williams
Hannah Young

Apologies: Councillors: Mike Bird, Mark Canniford, Caritas Charles, John Crockford-Hawley, Steve Hogg, Tom Nicholson and Ian Parker.

Absent: Councillor: David Shopland.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Sheila Smith (Director of Children's Services) and Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Officers: Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Mel Watts (Finance Manager), Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager), David McFarlane (external – Chairperson of Members' Allowances Remuneration Panel)

**COU Chairperson's Welcome
35**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the face-to-face meeting and noted that those councillors attending via Teams would not be in attendance formally or able to vote.

**COU Public Participation: Steve Voller, local resident - Banwell Bypass
36**

Steve Voller addressed members on the need for the Banwell Bypass due to traffic noise, pollution and danger to pedestrians from narrow footpaths. He urged members to support the motion on the agenda to allocate additional capital funds to allow the much needed and locally supported bypass to be built. He noted that the scheme was being debated again not because the need for it had changed but due to inflationary budget pressures requiring additional capital investment.

**COU Public Participation: Pauline Trapp, local resident - Banwell Bypass
37**

Pauline Trapp addressed members on the need to build the Banwell Bypass due to the increased levels of traffic resulting in frustration for residents and motorists and gridlock on the road. She noted the impact of the traffic issues on health and safety on residents and local school children and the inherent access disadvantages suffered by seaside towns. She highlighted the advantages to the wider local area of building non-motorised networks including cycleways and footways.

**COU Public Participation: Roz Willis, local resident - No. 50 bus service
38**

Roz Willis addressed members on the No 50 bus service and the issues faced by

older carers who no longer run a personal vehicle. She noted the requirement as a result, for a local bus service and highlighted the problems being faced by residents on Milton Hillside when the No.50 bus service changed adding that some older residents are not able to access electronic devices to use the WestLink service and the landline phone number was not being answered.

COU 39 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None declared.

COU 40 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 23 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

COU 41 Banwell Bypass - allocation of capital funds to support delivery

Councillor Bell presented the report to members. He explained that Stage 1 of the project was on track and within budget, but construction and design costs had increased because of inflationary pressures due to external events which could not have been predicted. Significant inflationary pressures outside of the council's control had meant that some elements were experiencing 35-50% increases. The project team had been considering mitigations for the cost pressures and he was optimistic that other mitigations would be found. He added that for the project to proceed, the budget shortfall needed to be covered and positive conversations with Homes England had already been taking place. He was asking the Council to support its share of the additional capital funding required (£11.9m). The report identified the sources of the additional capital requirement and Councillor Bell reaffirmed the council's commitment to delivering the elements of the infrastructure put forward as part of the planning application process.

In discussing the report, members asked whether the price could be fixed if the additional funding was agreed by the Council and whether the funding was protected for the wider counter measures that needed to be in place before the bypass opening. The s151 officer replied that the budget could not be fully fixed as contract prices had not been received for every element of the scheme. There was still some risk exposure however a contingency was held in the latest forecast. The council had a fixed price in terms of the construction programme but there were still design elements to finalise. Councillor Bell reaffirmed the council's commitment to the wider mitigations of the scheme.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Keating and

Resolved: that the Council

1. Supported progression of the Banwell Bypass scheme and necessary increase in Council funding
2. Approved in principle the allocation of £11.9m of funding to contribute towards the cost of Banwell bypass scheme
3. Approved in principle the increase in the Capital Programme by £11.9m, subject to the scheme being fully funded and progressed as planned.

COU 42 Petitions to be presented by Members (Standing Order No. 16)

42

None received.

COU 43 Question Time (Standing Order No.18)

43

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

COU 44 Chairperson's announcements

44

The Chairperson informed members that she had visited Blagdon Primary School as the pupils and staff celebrated their School of Sanctuary Award which was given in recognition of the welcome extended to refugees. She congratulated the staff at Yatton Infant School who worked with partners from other schools to put in place a plan to enable their pupils to continue to be educated after the recent fire. She had also started a Walking Football Tournament in the Clevedon Hand Stadium and encouraged members to participate in local events to show support to residents.

COU 45 Leader's announcements

45

None.

COU 46 Chief Executive's announcements

46

The Chief Executive informed members of the retirement of the Director of Children's Services. She invited Sheila Smith to accept flowers on behalf of the council. Sheila thanked members and officers for their support during the challenges faced by Children's Services and wished them well for the future.

COU 47 Forward Plan dated 3 July 2023

47

The Leader presented the forward plan.

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted

COU 48 Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report

48

None.

COU 49 Reports and matters referred from the Executive - dated 21 June 2023

49

None.

COU 50 Reports and matters referred from the Policy/Overview and Scrutiny Panels other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

50

None.

COU 51 Reports and matters referred from the other Committees other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

(1) Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances

The Chairperson introduced the Panel's Chairperson, David McFarlane who was attending to answer any queries from members. She thanked him for his work over many years and wished him well for his retirement from the panel.

The solicitor introduced the report and outlined the options open to members. He noted that the recommendation for the Basic Allowance would be putting the amount up to a point at which it would have been if the recommendations from previous panels had been accepted at the time.

Councillor Bell echoed the comments and thanks regarding Mr McFarlane's work over the years and extended his thanks to other panel members. He noted that the issue was politically and personally sensitive, but it had been 7 years since the panel's recommendations had been implemented by the council. The issues now needed to be addressed and the purpose of the independent panel was to dispassionately consider the evidence, the roles and responsibilities members undertake and trends around the country for similar authorities and make recommendations. Councillor Bell supported the recommendations in the report save that the increase in the Basic Allowance take place over two years.

In discussing the report, members asked whether any increase going forwards could be tied to the uplift in staff pay to avoid having to accept or reject the panel's recommendations which could result in a large increase at times. Councillor Bell responded that the increases since 2016 had been linked to the staff pay award and this would continue to be the case going forwards. The panel's recommendations sought to address the issue of allowances being out of kilter as a result of previous panels' recommendations not being accepted. The link to the staff pay award in future would allow the allowance to be rebased.

Members also noted that the Special Responsibility Allowance for the Chairperson of the Licensing Committee was based on them chairing all the Licensing sub-committees and this too was supported. Members also noted that the staff pay award last year was a flat amount and not a percentage award. Councillor Bell agreed that whilst the award to staff last year was a flat amount, a percentage increase had been applied to the Basic Allowance for members. This approximated to 4% which he felt was a pragmatic response to the issue of a flat amount being awarded to staff and anticipated this approach would be applied should this happen again in future years.

Motion: Moved by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Gibbons and

Resolved: that the Council

- a) Received the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and thanked the members of the Panel for their work in producing the report
- b) Approved the Panel's recommendations, subject to the increase in the Basic Allowance being applied over a two-year period and instructed officers to implement the new allowance scheme as amended

COU 52 North Somerset Environment Company Shareholder Update

Councillor Cartman introduced the report. He informed members that it was an update report following the council's decision to bring waste services within a council controlled company. The report was from the shareholder perspective as the council owned the company. He added that the report was about how to develop a long-term sustainable business rather than about missed collections. The goal was to meld the ethos of the public sector with the entrepreneurship of the private sector. As the shareholder representative of the council, he attended quarterly meetings. He noted the challenges as well as the wins including high recycling rates, a lower rate of missed collections and an improved relationship with the company's employees. He added that there were challenges including the set-up costs, the inflationary environment and driver shortages which had led to a deficit, but the board was focussed on the recovery plan.

In discussing the report, members highlighted areas which the council could do to support NSEC including the issue of parked cars and overgrown foliage leading to missed collections.

Resolved: that the Council noted the report.

COU 53 Corporate Parenting Report

Councillor Gibbons presented the report and thanked Sheila Smith, retiring Director of Children's Services for her support over the years. She reiterated the role of a Corporate Parent to members as they were all one by virtue of their councillor role.

She encouraged members to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel for which all members had been sent the papers for the upcoming July meeting.

In discussing the report, members asked that places reserved for councillors at the Weston Carnival be given to children and their foster families instead and offered to speak to the Youth Parliament on the issue of climate change.

COU 54 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto

(1) Avon Fire Authority

Resolved: that Council noted the report given by Councillor Payne

(2) Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

Councillor Crew reported on the points of discussion at the recent meeting including the outcome of the Chief Constable's comment regarding her opinion that the Avon and Somerset Police was institutionally racist. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable are setting up an independent review panel. Other topics discussed were Operation Bluestone around action being taken in respect of violence against women and girls and Operation Scorpion involving 11 thousand drug related operations. At the meeting Councillor Crew

raised the issue that the two neighbourhood teams in North Somerset should now be fully staffed given the agreed increase in the precept for 2023/24 from the authority was to address this matter.

COU 55 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)

Chairperson
