

## Minutes

of the Meeting of

## The Council

### Tuesday, 19 September 2023

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 6.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 7.42 pm

#### Councillors:

Wendy Griggs (Chairperson)

Nigel Ashton  
Mike Bell  
Christopher Blades  
Steve Bridger  
Peter Bryant  
Peter Burden  
Mark Canniford  
Ashley Cartman  
Annabelle Chard  
Caritas Charles  
James Clayton  
Jemma Coles  
John Crockford-Hawley  
Ciaran Cronnelly  
Stuart Davies  
Oliver Ellis  
Catherine Gibbons  
Jenna Ho Marris  
Nicola Holland  
Clare Hunt  
Sue Mason  
Hugh Malyan  
Stuart McQuillan  
Tom Nicholson  
Ian Parker  
Robert Payne  
Marcia Pepperall  
Bridget Petty  
Lisa Pilgrim  
Terry Porter  
Michael Pryke  
David Shopland  
Luke Smith

Timothy Snaden  
Mike Solomon  
Helen Thornton  
Joe Tristram  
Richard Tucker  
Annemieke Waite  
Roger Whitfield

**Apologies:** Councillors: Peter Crew (Vice-Chairperson) Mike Bird, Andy Cole, Steve Hogg, Patrick Keating, Dan Thomas, Martin Williams and Hannah Young.

**Absent:** Councillor Marc Aplin.

**Officers in attendance:** Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Carolyn Fair (Interim Director of Children's Services), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Lucy Shomali (Director of Place), Mike Riggall (Information and ICT Security Manager) and Jane Horner (Programme Management Officer).

**Partaking via Microsoft Teams:**

Officers: Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services), Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager), Victoria Barvenova (Climate Emergency Project Manager) and Geoff Chamberlain (Head of Procurement)

**COU Chairperson's Welcome**

**56**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the face-to-face meeting. She informed members of the death of ex-Councillor Mark Crosby, formerly Chairperson of Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel and expressed her sincere condolences on behalf of herself and the Council to his family.

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

**57**

None declared.

**COU Minutes**

**58**

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the meeting of 11 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

It was noted that Councillor Parker had attended the meeting but had arrived late and not sent apologies as stated in the draft minutes.

**COU Support Services 2025 Commissioning Intentions**

**59**

Councillor Bell presented the report. He informed members of the background to the current contract which was due to expire in September 2025. He noted that a range of support services were currently commissioned through Agilysys which sub-contracted significant contract parts to a revenues and benefits solution and support services provider (Liberata Ltd) and further contracted parts to additional specialist providers.

He added that the report sought to restructure the commissioning. The council was looking to move towards a multiple provider model to offer best value for money and which would be incrementally implemented during 2023-2025. A strong options appraisal had been carried out over several years and would continue as the process went forwards.

In debating the report, members highlighted the following points: concerns around the council's level of interaction with residents; concerns about the contracting out of services in the past and the opportunities if services were brought back in-house; the preparation of an in-house option as a comparator for each part of the service; whether outsourcing was in the public interest; the limited number of market operators for some parts of the services being tendered; the positives of the Council Connect service; the timely adoption of innovative technology with more nimble contracts; that various solutions were possible and should be outcome not process driven.

Councillor Bell assured members that all options were being considered and that there were elements that the council was looking to bring in-house but there were no easy solutions. The council was aiming to both deliver the financial savings required but also the services and support which residents sought. He recognised that the current contract had not been flexible and responsive enough in the past when change had been required.

**Resolved:** that the Council approved the commissioning intentions for Support Services as follows:

1. To move toward a multi-provider model.
2. To stagger contract end dates so that existing services were re-procured incrementally.
3. To procure the revenues and benefits service using a government framework.
4. To develop an options appraisal for ICT provision to compare a shared service within the public sector vs. a commercial supplier offer.

## **COU 60 Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan update and progress report**

Councillor Waite presented the report which summarised the council's progress with the Climate Emergency Action Plan. She noted that the report proposed some changes to the council's climate change governance. Several success stories were included in the report including decarbonising the council's estate and transport and the Bus Service Improvement Plan. She added that the council had participated in schemes offering energy saving grants to residents and net zero grants to businesses and had adopted the important Flood Risk Management Strategy. She highlighted the award of the Carbon Literacy Silver Award to the council.

She noted however that the council was off target to reach net zero by 2030 even though it had reduced its carbon emissions by 24%. She added that the report set out the council's pathways to net zero and how it intended to strengthen the governance of the Climate Change Action Plan.

In debating the report, members commented on the following matters: the extent

to which climate change and the reasons for it could be controlled; the long term capital investment requirements to reduce emissions from the council's own buildings; concern over children growing up in a climate of fear; affordability of measures given a shrinking economy; engagement with community to communicate the urgency and cost of the measures needed given the cost of living crisis; the requirement for an adequate transport system; whether service density of public transport would be encouraged through mixed use developments to encourage active travel; concerns over infrastructure for electric vehicles; rate of progression of climate change initiatives; the opportunities afforded to the council and the North Somerset area by addressing climate change issues; the source of match funding; the current public consultation on the council's Corporate Plan; consideration of a Citizen's Assembly approach and that initiatives should be in support of services and not at the expense of them.

It was noted that it was in the council's interest to modernise its own buildings so that they were fit for purpose and efficient to reduce ongoing energy costs despite the requirement to match grant funding.

In summing up, Councillor Waite acknowledged that some aspects were not in the control of the council and that planning housing around existing settlements was preferable to avoid unnecessary travel. She reiterated the need to engage with residents and anticipated bringing the next update report to the Council in six months to ensure it was robust. This would also allow the relevant scrutiny panel to be engaged. She welcomed the idea of a Citizens Assembly.

**Resolved:** that the Council:

1. Formally reconfirmed the commitment of North Somerset Council to achieving Net Zero across North Somerset by 2030, and to the delivery of the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, in recognition of the criticality of the Climate Emergency.
2. Note the progress, actions and proposals recorded in the report (including improved governance) and recognised the need for an acceleration in delivery.
3. Endorsed the proposed creation of a Net Zero Pathway for North Somerset Council, to be reported to a future meeting of North Somerset Council.
4. Approve the delegation of authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Climate, Waste and Sustainability, to submit funding bids of up to £10m (including match-funding of up to £5m) to support the decarbonisation of assets owned by North Somerset Council.

## **COU 61 Portishead Neighbourhood Plan**

Councillor Canniford introduced the report and commended the town council on the work put in to draw up the Neighbourhood Plan for Portishead. He explained that once "made", the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan and its policies would sit alongside the current North Somerset Core Strategy, Development Management Plan and Site Allocations Plan. Alterations may need to be made once the new Local Plan had been adopted.

**Resolved:** that the Council “made” the Portishead Neighbourhood Plan.

**COU  
62 Corporate Parenting Report**

Councillor Gibbons presented the report. She highlighted the training offered to members in the councillor resource area and outlined their responsibilities as Corporate Parents. She informed members that the pledge (“Our Promise”) made during the previous administration was being refreshed and invited members to attend the Corporate Parenting Panel meetings.

**Resolved:** that the report be noted.

**COU  
63 Proposed changes to quorum for Policy and Scrutiny Panels**

The Assistant Director, Legal and Governance introduced the report and noted that there was a mismatch currently between the quorum required for Council and its committees and that required for the Policy and Scrutiny Panels. The recommendation in the report was that the quorum for both be brought into parity and set the quorum for all at one quarter of the committee and panel membership.

**Resolved:** that

(1) the quorum of Policy and Scrutiny Panels be amended to one quarter and the Constitution be amended accordingly.

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

None received.

**COU  
65 Motions by Members (Standing Order No. 14)**

**(1) Motion for the Ocean and Rivers – Councillor Tristram**

In introducing his motion, Councillor Tristram noted that 14 authorities had so far adopted the motion and that it was a shortened version of the model one which he would use for planning the report to bring back to Council within 12 months. He added that North Somerset depended on the Bristol Channel for tourism and therefore the sea and beaches needed to be of a standard which invited people to visit the area. Additionally, the rivers flowing through the area were important for drainage, fishing, and biodiversity.

**Motion:** moved by Councillor Tristram and seconded by Councillor Gibbons

“This Council notes that North Somerset is a coastal district that is also one of the most low-lying and flood prone areas in England. We depend on the sea for our livelihood through tourism, and on the land threatened by sea-level rise and river flooding for our farming and places to live and work. We recognise the importance of the marine and river ecosystems and our role as a stakeholder for them. We undertake to bring a report forward to Council within 12 months of this motion containing appropriate recommendations to ensure we play our part in ensuring

realising clean, healthy, and productive rivers and oceans alongside our existing commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

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

**COU  
66 Question Time (Standing Order No.18)**

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

**COU  
67 Chairperson's announcements**

The Chairperson encouraged members to visit the Council Connect Team to see their work. She advised that the new Members' Room was now available for use and asked members to urgently advise whether they would be attending the Winter Gardens to view the Weston Carnival so that that any unused places may be given to the council's foster carers and care leavers.

**COU  
68 Leader's announcements**

The Leader noted that National Pride was being hosted in North Somerset at Grove Park in Weston on 30 September.

**COU  
69 Chief Executive's announcements**

The Chief Executive echoed the Chairperson's condolences to the family and friends of ex-Councillor Mark Crosby on hearing of his death. She had written on behalf of the council. She also announced the death of ex-Councillor Howard Roberts and would be writing to express the council's condolences.

**COU  
70 Forward Plan dated 31 August 2023**

The Leader presented the forward plan.

**Resolved:** that the Forward Plan be noted

**COU  
71 Policy and Scrutiny Panel Report**

None.

**COU  
72 Reports and matters referred from the Executive - dated 06 September 2023**

None.

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

None.

**COU 74 Reports and matters referred from the other Committees other than those dealt with elsewhere on this agenda**

None.

**COU 75 Reports on joint arrangements and external organisations and questions relating thereto**

**(1) Avon Fire Authority**

None – no meeting since previous Council meeting

**(2) Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel**

None – no meeting since previous Council meeting

**(3) West of England Joint Scrutiny Committee**

None – first Joint Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 2 October. Councillor Bird had attended the meeting on 8 September as an observer. Councillor Ashton had been advised by the WECA committee clerk that North Somerset Council attendance was not possible on this occasion

**COU 76 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)**

None.

---

Chairperson

---