

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 18 October 2023

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 4.17 pm

Councillors:

Mike Bell (Chairperson)

Catherine Gibbons (Vice-Chairperson)

Mark Canniford

James Clayton

Jenna Ho Marris

Mike Solomon

Annemieke Waite

Roger Whitfield

Hannah Young

Also in attendance: Councillors Christopher Blades, Steve Bridger, Peter Burden, Bridget Petty, Terry Porter and Luke Smith.

Officers in attendance: Jo Walker (Chief Executive), Amy Webb (Director of Corporate Services), Nicholas Brain (Assistant Director Legal & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Lucy Shomali (Director of Place), Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services), Carolyn Fair, Vanessa Andrews (Marketing and Communications Manager), Michael Reep (Planning Policy Manager), Claire Courtois (Principal Planning Policy Officer), Gemma Dando (Assistant Director - Neighbourhood Management), Jenny Ford (Head of Development) and Richard Kent (Head of Planning, Place Directorate) Vanessa Andrews (Head of Communications), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services), Matt Lenny (Director of Public Health), Richard Kent (Head of Planning), Claire Courtois (Planning Policy Team Lead – Policy), Michael Reep (Planning Policy Manager), Nabila Marrow (Business Manager – North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board) and Gemma Dando (Assistant Director – Neighbourhoods and Transport)

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Clare Hunt, Hugh Malyan, Sue Mason and Robert Payne

Officers: Rob Thomson (Head of Infrastructure, BSIP), Peter King (Senior Project Manager), Bella Fortune (Head of Transport), James Padgham (Infrastructure Delivery Manager – BSIP), Carl Nicholson (Head of Passenger Transport – BSIP) and Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager)

EXE 42 Chairperson's Welcome

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being livestreamed on the internet. He noted that he was reordering items 10 and 11 on the agenda to the end of the agenda.

EXE 43 Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO 6)

Alan Rice addressed the Executive about digital exclusion and impact of this on those seeking social housing through Home Choice. He noted that there had been a 50% drop in numbers on the Home Choice website seeking accommodation when there was a change of software. Issues surrounded the need for an email address and the uploading of documents particularly when using a mobile phone.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Rice for his address and asked Councillor Ho Marris to contact him regarding the points made. He further noted that there were other ways in which those who were digitally excluded could contact the council and there was support available from the council's Housing and Homelessness team.

EXE 44 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None declared.

EXE 45 Minutes 06 September 2023

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

EXE 46 Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses

None.

EXE 47 Matters referred to the Executive and not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 48 West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 49 Forward Plan dated 03 October 2023

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

Councillor Canniford presented the report and thanked the Planning Policy Team for their work. He advised that the plan would be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by an independent planning inspector after the period of consultation and any agreed amendments. He noted the uncertain national picture with the government suggesting impending reforms to the planning system but that the plan was required to support the prevention unwanted development in areas not supported by local communities. The plan covered 15 years with the majority of growth to be in the towns of the area and reflected the constrained nature of North Somerset. He added that the council's own housing needs assessment had suggested a requirement for 14902 new homes over the period and the government had signalled that councils could identify their own housing need. The preferred options consultation had been reviewed and green belt sites had been removed after feedback.

Councillor Canniford advised members that the same housing needs assessment had identified the requirement to maximise the need for affordable housing which had consequently been increased via an amendment to the relevant policy in the Pre-submission plan. The scale of housing in Nailsea and Backwell had been significantly reduced due to infrastructure constraints and strategic gaps introduced in two areas. The preferred options consultation had identified three sites for growth of which only one remained at Wolvershill. He added that further employment sites were required, with one already identified at Clevedon. Some settlement boundaries had been reviewed with development within settlement boundaries being acceptable and that outside of them would be strictly controlled. Development adjacent to settlement boundaries had been removed.

Councillor Canniford highlighted the future timeline for plan preparation to members with a view to the new Local Plan being adopted by the Council by the end of next year.

Councillor Ho Marris informed members of the revised wording to two policies within the Draft Pre-submission Plan:

“(1) Affordable Housing

Policy DP43 Affordable housing (including rural exceptions schemes) is amended to increase the proportion of affordable housing sought on green field sites to 38.5% to reflect the overall proportion of affordable housing need identified in the Local Housing Needs Assessment. Officers are asked to consider the most effective delivery of that percentage, including consideration of grant input where appropriate.

And

(2) Embodied carbon

Policy DP6 Net Zero construction is amended to specify a target for embodied carbon within new buildings in order to provide clarity on how the policy requirement is delivered. Officers are asked to identify an appropriate standard using the approach recently adopted in the Bath and North East Somerset Local

Plan Partial Review as the starting point.”

She advised that the detailed wording for the two revised policies would be worked on by officers and members and spoke in detail on the reasons for introducing the amendments.

In debating the report, members spoke on the following matters: support for the council using a local derived housing requirement; concern around the number of windfall sites expected to come forward from within villages and speculative applications from developers for green fields around the villages; the need to robustly consider applications against policies; imminent changes to the National Policy Planning Framework and consequences for changes to the draft Local Plan; a request for elected members to have sight of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan before it was published with the public consultation documents; the influence of the General Election and possible policy changes by any incoming government; concerns over affordable housing and the percentage required in terms of financial viability and the enforcement of this; the inclusion of a site in the plan at Congresbury which had previously been rejected by the council’s planning committee and the importance of the plan in shaping the local area.

Councillor Canniford confirmed that he welcomed conversations with members around issues that still concerned them.

Resolved: that the Executive

1. approved the pre-submission (Reg 19) version of the plan for publication and public consultation.

2. approved that any necessary further amendments to the plan prior to publication and public consultation be agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Spatial Planning, Placemaking and Economy.

3. agreed that following consultation, the plan be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination with any further proposed amendments agreed by the Director of Place in consultation with the Executive Member for Spatial Planning, Placemaking and Economy.

4. approved the change to the wording of Policy DP43, Affordable Housing as follows:

“Policy DP43 Affordable housing (including rural exceptions schemes) is amended to increase the proportion of affordable housing sought on green field sites to 38.5% to reflect the overall proportion of affordable housing need identified in the Local Housing Needs Assessment. Officers are asked to consider the most effective delivery of that percentage, including consideration of grant input where appropriate.”

5. approved the change to the wording of Policy DP6, Net Zero as follows:

“Policy DP6 Net Zero construction is amended to specify a target for embodied carbon within new buildings in order to provide clarity on how the policy

requirement is delivered. Officers are asked to identify an appropriate standard using the approach recently adopted in the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan Partial Review as the starting point.”

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 51 Contract Award for Highway Surfacing

Councillor Young presented the report to members advising that the cyclical and reactive maintenance contract had been awarded to North Somerset Environment Company (NSEC) in November 2022 by Full Council. Additionally, two single provider frameworks were created to deliver carriage surfacing and surface dressings works. The carriage surfacing works were the subject of the decision before members. Steps had been put in place to make the process more efficient thus reducing costs and providing flexibility. Five suppliers had been invited to tender with the successful bidder offering the best in terms of value for money and service delivery alignment with the council’s objectives.

The Chairperson noted that the council was reducing its costs in effectively cutting out middlemen and streamlining processes. He was pleased to see quality scores of “high”.

Resolved: that the contract highway surfacing be awarded to John Wainwright and Co Limited (company number 00073151) for a term of 4 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 52 Medium Term Financial Plan and Revenue Update report

Councillor Bell presented the report. He advised that since the last report, officers and members had been working together to produce a range of savings to include in the next phase of the council’s financial plan development given the challenging financial position of the council. He noted the sustained inflationary and demand pressures being faced by the council together with budget reductions over the previous 15 years.

He informed members that the report set out the strategy for closing the £50m budget gap being faced by the council over the next four-year period including allocating specific financial targets to specific budget areas, maximising income, and reducing the net costs of service delivery. Further reports would come to

members after feedback from members, town and parish councils, residents, and other stakeholders.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report.

EXE 53 Capital Strategy for the period 2024-2028 and Capital Budget updates for 2023/24

Councillor Bell introduced the report noting the report sought authority from members to recommend the approval by Council of the increased capital funding for the Banwell Bypass. The council's current investment plan was extensive at over £400m for the five-year period to 2028.

Resolved: that the Executive:

1. Noted the proposed timeline, process, and considerations for developing the 2024/25 Capital Strategy,
2. Approved the amendments to the 2023/24 capital programme as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report
3. Recommended to Council approval of the following:
 - a. An increase in the Banwell Bypass scheme of £11.9m as per July 2023 Council meeting COU041, which provided an agreement in principle subject to the council securing additional funding toward the scheme. (This being a £9.9m addition to the programme and a transfer of £2m from A38/MRN project),
 - b. An increase in the capital programme of £12m for additional spending on the Banwell Bypass scheme following the additional grant allocation from Homes England.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out in the report and discussed above.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out in the report.

EXE 54 Budget Monitor 2023/24 - Month 4

Councillor Bell introduced the report noting that it updated the council's forecast spend for the year with an anticipated overspend of £2.2m. He added that the forecast would move as the council continued to work on areas of cost pressures and implement mitigations. He highlighted the areas of costs pressures to

members which were children's services, waste disposal and the staff pay award which was still to be agreed nationally.

Resolved: that the Executive:

- i. Noted the projected revenue budget forecasts as detailed within the report and also the issues and assumptions that underpin the forecasts,
- ii. Noted the financial risks being assessed by the council, which may have an impact on future monitoring reports.

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 North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Plan

Councillor Whitfield introduced the report and advised that Safeguarding Adults Boards (SAB) were a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 and to ensure robust scrutiny and independent Chairperson was employed. He added that the purpose of the SAB was to help and safeguard adults who drew on care and support needs. He noted that the report set out challenges and opportunities faced by statutory agencies together with examples of good practice and areas of development for adult safeguarding. It was important for the Executive to have oversight of the area's adult safeguarding activity as well as being able to question the annual report and the SAB's activities.

Councillor Whitfield introduced the Safeguarding Adult's Board Manager who presented the annual plan, report of activities, intentions and outcomes to members as detailed in the published report and appendices.

Resolved: that the Executive noted the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Plan.

EXE 56 Q1 Performance and Risk Update report

The Director of Corporate Services presented the report to members. She advised that both were regularly monitored via the council's performance management framework, through the leadership team and with the Executive members on a one-to-one basis.

The Chairperson encouraged members to read the report as it was an important document in measuring and assessing the impact and performance of the council.

Resolved: that the Executive noted the report.

EXE Draft Calendar of Executive Meetings 2024/25

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The Chairperson informed members that the council would attempt to try different time slots and different venues for the Executive meetings. He thanked officers in Democratic Services in identifying opportunities to do this.

Resolved: that the Executive approved the draft calendar of Executive meetings for the 2024-25 Municipal 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 58 Oral reports of Executive Councillors

Councillor Solomon informed members of the temporary closure of Marine Lake due to the presence of a seal.

Councillor Gibbons informed the meeting of the North Somerset Day of SEND which was ongoing at Priory School.

EXE 59 Bus Service Improvement Plan - Update report

Councillor Young presented the report which was broad and gave an update on the range of progress made since the award of funding in November 2022. She thanked officers for the work involved in the producing the report and for the work being carried out with the wider improvement plan and specifically around local bus services.

Councillor Young explained that the Bus Services Improvement Plan involved the creation of a sustainable bus network across North Somerset in the future and that the funding was time limited. She noted that communities wished to see improvements in local bus services which had been damaged by the impact of Covid. She advised that the council had entered a legal agreement (Enhanced Partnership) with a number of partners including neighbouring local authorities, the West of England Combined Authority, bus service operators and range of other transport providers to work together to improve the bus network and services including the provision of appropriate road infrastructure.

Councillor Young explained the recommendations and reasons behind them in detail to members. She highlighted the amount of funding being put into enhancing specific services across the network by the council which included increasing the frequency of service and implementing a service where one did not previously exist. She added that if a vibrant and supported network (by commercial operators) had not been created at the end of the two-year funding period, the council would not have the funding to continue with them. The plan was to introduce a network which was attractive to bus users and commercial operators so that the services were sustainable in the future. She informed members that legally, local authorities were not permitted to run buses.

Councillor Young explained that ward members and town and parish councils were being involved in conversations around road infrastructure changes. Engagement and a series of consultations around these were planned to ensure they were needed and viable before being implemented but she added they were crucial to the success of the improvement plan as lowering bus operators running costs would allow the network and routes to be sustainable. The benefit to passengers were increased frequency of services and fewer congestion points which meant greater reliability.

Councillor Young informed members that she and officers were waiting on additional information for the Design and Build report decision. The meeting would be adjourned to allow this information to be obtained before the contract award decision was made.

In debating the report, members asked questions and received clarification around the following areas: concern over the deadline for spending the grant funding and specifics around the proposed engagement plan with communities; the legally binding commitments on the bus operations in respect of the Enhanced Partnership scheme given they are receiving tax payer funding; the level of delegations in one of the recommendations in the report and a request for scrutiny oversight of this process and queries around the delegation of the annual Department for Transport report.

The Chairperson clarified members' queries around the delegations in the report and advised that the sums involved were in line with the council's financial scheme of delegation and existing approvals and covered a range of projects not just one. He added that given decisions were not being made unilaterally by the council but involved other authorities, it was essential that delegations were in place to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport and s151 officer to expedite joint decisions. This did not preclude engagement with elected members, scrutiny committees and other parties around priorities.

Resolved: that the Executive:

1. Approved the communications and engagement approach for the BSIP capital programme, as outlined in section 4 of the report
2. Approved the WEST Brand to replace the existing 'TravelWest' sub-regional transport branding, effective immediately.
3. Approved the delegation of decisions about adjustments to BSIP grant allocation against work packages to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport and s151 officer. This is due to the tight delivery timescales required within the BSIP and members noted that allocations will be guided by a set of recommendations resulting from the recent BSIP prioritisation study undertaken 12 months into the BSIP Revenue programme. All allocations will be within the existing grant envelope.
4. Approved that officers submit an Expression of Interest by 20 October for the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme and a bid

for this funding by 15 December. Delegated future decisions relating to bidding and award to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport (with advice from Director of Place, and S151 officer) including to submit an EOI and bid for up to £10m financial value. Officers will subsequently seek approvals to increase the BSIP programme and any relevant council budgets by up to that amount if the bidding is successful.

5. Agreed to delegate to the Executive Member for Highways and Transport (with advice from Director of Place and Monitoring Officer) any updates to the BSIP MOU between WECA and NSC (which was agreed at Executive on 18th February 2023) to set out roles and responsibilities to reflect the management of the Enhanced Partnership for the West of England area.

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.

Meeting adjourned 4.17pm

Meeting reconvened November 2, 2023 3.00pm

Councillors:

Mike Bell (Chairperson)
Catherine Gibbons (Vice-Chairperson)

Mark Canniford
James Clayton
Jenna Ho Marris
Mike Solomon
Roger Whitfield
Hannah Young

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

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Mike Bird, Steve Bridger, Peter Burden, Caritas Charles, Patrick Keating, Sue Mason, Annemieke Waite

Officers: Gemma Dando (Assistant Director Neighbourhood and Transport), Mel Watts (Head of Finance), Rob Thomson (Head of Infrastructure, BSIP), tune (Head of Transport), James Padgham (Infrastructure Delivery Manager – BSIP)

EXE 60 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) - Contract Award of Design and Build Contractor

Councillor Young introduced the item with the recommendation to award the contract to Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd. Members were reminded that North Somerset had been allocated full grant funding for the projected costs of the schemes covered by this contract. There had been a full procurement process and the schemes that were covered by this were listed in the paper also.

The contract commits the council to undertake the work to design these schemes, including a process of consultation, modelling and amending initial designs where necessary. This allowed provision not to continue with any of the individual schemes should the council not want to progress.

Consultation and being open and transparent with our communities was critical in taking these schemes forward. Councillor Young therefore proposed two additional recommendations as follows:

“2) That the Executive Member for Highways and Transport (in consultation with the Executive) formally approves scheme progression of individual BSIP infrastructure schemes to implementation stage after completion of the design and consultation phase, thus providing a gateway opportunity to decide whether schemes should proceed or not to implementation.

3) Consultations will be undertaken in accordance with any requirements of the Executive Member for Highways and Transport before the design and consultation phase is deemed complete and the results of such consultations be reported to the Executive Member when considering the gateway review set out in the recommendation 2.”

Members echoed their support for the recommendations and thanked those involved in getting the scheme to this stage.

Resolved: that the Executive

1) agreed that the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Design and Build contract be awarded to Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd (Company No. 01493003), at an expected contract value of £15.4m. The duration to be 23 months to October 2025.

2) agreed that the Executive Member for Highways and Transport (in consultation with the Executive) formally approves scheme progression of individual BSIP infrastructure schemes to implementation stage after completion of the design and consultation phase, thus providing a gateway opportunity to decide whether schemes should proceed or not to implementation.

3) agreed that consultations will be undertaken in accordance with any requirements of the Executive Member for Highways and Transport before the design and consultation phase is deemed complete and the results of such

consultations be reported to the Executive Member when considering the gateway review set out in the recommendation 2.

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

None.

Chairperson
