

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Executive

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

New Council Chamber

Meeting Commenced: 2.30 pm

Meeting Concluded: 3.48 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 Mike Bird, Steve Bridger, Peter Bryant, Peter Burden, Ashley Cartman, Andy Cole, Thomas Daw, 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) and Rachel Lewis (Development and Regeneration Programme Manager).

Partaking via Microsoft Teams:

Councillors: Jemma Coles, Oliver Ellis, Clare Hunt, Hugh Malyan, Sue Mason, Robert Payne, and Michael Pryke

Officers: Mel Watts (Head of Finance), Gemma Dando (Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods and Transport), Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services and Housing), Pip Hesketh (Assistant Director – Education Partnerships), Emma Diakou (Head of Business Insight, Policy, and Partnerships) and Hazel Brinton (Committee Services Manager)

EXE Chairperson's Welcome

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The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting which was being livestreamed. He noted that a number of the agenda items would be referred onto to Council subsequently.

EXE 80 Addresses by Members of the Public (ESO 6) - Simon Talbot-Ponsonby - local resident, Abbots Leigh

Simon Talbot-Ponsonby addressed the Executive about the level of resource given to the management of planning enforcement. Whilst noting that the Executive could not make decisions in respect of individual cases, he gave examples of concerns relating to Abbots Leigh and asked that sufficient resources be allocated to the service to allow proper enforcement.

The Chairperson thanked Mr Talbot-Ponsonby for his address and advised that the Executive was responsible only for the overall allocation of resources to the planning and enforcement service. He asked that the Executive Member for Spatial Planning, Placemaking and Economy investigate the resourcing of the service and added that any matters relating to priorities around enforcement on specific sites were for officers and the Planning and Regulatory Committee to determine.

EXE 81 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None declared.

EXE 82 Minutes

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

EXE 83 Non-Executive Councillors' Addresses

None.

EXE 84 Medium Term Financial Plan Update 2024-2028 (MTFP) and Recommended Budget for 2024-25

Councillor Bell presented the report to members noting that it would be referred to the Council meeting later in the month. He added that whilst the council had been able to set a balanced budget, demand led services in relation to social care, housing and council tax benefits now accounted for around 70% of the council's budget. After capital financing costs and demand led services, 25% of the budget remained for all other services including libraries, parks, street lighting and waste collection. He advised that the council was raising council tax by just under 5% and that a quarter of the overall council tax bill related to services not provided by North Somerset Council such as town and parish councils, the police and fire service. He informed members that additional investment was being made into social services.

Members considered the report and noted their duty to consider the Equality Impact Assessments which accompanied the budget. They had been finalised to include feedback from the equalities stakeholder engagement session and demonstrated the cumulative impact of budget changes on those with low incomes and the impact of the rural nature of the district. Councillor Bell confirmed that the Corporate Plan would be referred to Council with a recommendation for approval. The Corporate Services Director confirmed that the recommendation to Council

later in the month would include details of the final finance settlement that had been received from central government.

Resolved: that the Executive

- i. Noted the updated revenue budget forecasts in respect of the current 2023/24 financial year as detailed within section 3.3 of the report.
- ii. Noted the updated core assumptions that have been included within the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) as detailed within sections 3.4 to 3.7 of the report and summarised in Appendices 5 and 6 of the report, and the impact this has on the council's four-year MTFP forecast.
- iii. Noted the statement of the Chief Financial Officer on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of the recommended budget as detailed in section 3.10 of the report and attached at Appendix 8 of the report.
- iv. Noted the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) report attached at Appendix 9 to the report and the duty to familiarise themselves with the published EIAs that underpin the 2024/25 budget savings plans.
- v. Noted the draft school budgets and funding allocations as detailed within section 3.12 of the report that had been incorporated within the council's recommended budget for 2024/25 following the consultation and engagement process that has been led by the Strategic Schools Forum (SSF) over recent months.
- vi. Approved uplifts to the adult social care provider fee rates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 as detailed within section 3.14 of the report.

Recommended to Council

- i. that the Corporate Plan for the period 2024 to 2028 as detailed within section 3.2 of the report and supported by Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report be approved
- ii. that a revenue budget for 2024/25 as shown at Appendix 4 of the report be approved
- iii. that a council tax increase of 2.99% for 2024/25 to support the recommended budget be approved
- iv. that an adult social care precept of 2% on the council tax for 2024/25 to specifically support spending on adult social care services within the recommended budget 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
85** **Fees and Charges 2024-25**

Councillor Bell presented the report to members noting that it set out the increase in fees and charges where the increase met the threshold for consideration by the Executive. Alterations were mainly linked to inflationary costs and pressures, and he highlighted the changes around licensing fees in respect of events. These charges were subject to further refinement through a delegated decision to the relevant Executive member in due course.

Resolved: that the Executive

a) Approved the changes to general fees and charges as detailed in appendix 1 of the report.

b) Approved the recommended proposed changes to existing on and off-street parking fees and charges, as set out in section 3.2 and detailed in appendix 2 of the report. This will be treated as “Notice” and included in a variation of the current parking orders from 1st April 2024

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
86** **Treasury Management Strategy 2024-25**

Councillor Bell presented the report which set out the council’s overall approach to borrowing and investment.

Recommended to Council

- i. That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25, as described throughout the report and shown in Appendix 1 of the report be approved,
- ii. That the Prudential Indicators for 2024/25, as shown in Appendix 2 be approved,
- iii. That the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2024/25, as shown in Section 3.5 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
87** **Capital Strategy 2024-25**

Councillor Bell presented the report which set out the council’s capital strategy for the next four years and included areas where the council had obtained additional funding.

Members discussed the report and noted that the relevant policy and scrutiny panel would consider the stream of work around energy reduction measures

although the budget for this had been reduced, how the budget was being applied in relation to highways maintenance particularly given the opportunities resulting from the change in contracts, the A38 Major Road Network project and a request that the council consider setting up a Housing Revenue Account.

Councillor Bell noted that the challenging financial position meant the council had diminished headroom regarding funding capital projects and that the programme was increasingly being driven by those projects where external funding had been secured.

Recommended to Council

1. a. that the capital strategy for 2024 to 2028 as detailed throughout the report be approved
b. that an increase in the capital programme of £9.789m for a new range of investment proposals as detailed in section 3.5 and Appendix 3 of the report, subject to confirmation of grant funding allocations, be approved
2. that the additional borrowing impact within the capital programme of £2.6m for the period 2024 to 2028 as detailed in section 3.4 and Appendix 4 of the report, which will increase the council's overall borrowing requirement to £114.6m over the period, be noted
3. that the amendments to the capital budget for 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved
4. that the approval for the detailed highways programme be delegated to the Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Transport in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Highways

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 Birnbeck Commissioning and Procurement Plan

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Councillor Canniford presented the report to members. He informed members that the plan involved the commissioning and procurement of specialist contracts which were important for public safety. The council would only be spending amounts which had already been agreed and funded. Progress on the project which was complicated would now start to be seen.

Members clarified that the RNLI would manage the reconstruction and renovation project of the pier itself as it was their specialism. Concern was expressed over the timescales involved but Councillor Canniford confirmed that whilst the wooden element of the pier was in poor condition, the metal structure of the legs was good. Work on the landside would start soon as the Levelling Up Fund required the grant to be spent within 12 months.

Resolved: that the Executive approved the combined Commissioning and Procurement Plan to proceed to the market for the following contracts:

- (i) Specialist contracts for advanced phases of work that were required to protect public safety and the integrity of the land, buildings and structures prior to the main restoration works (up to £575k).
- (ii) Restoration and renovation works funded by the Levelling Up Fund (up to £3.9m).
- (iii) Restoration and renovation works funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund (c£4.5m but dependent upon grant award).

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 89 Public consultation for introducing 3 weekly residual waste collection

Councillor Waite introduced the report and explained the rationale for the potential change in frequency of residual waste collection and the proposal for public consultation on the issue which was detailed in the report.

Members debated the report and noted the following areas for consideration: town centre collection, the storage and collection of medical waste, the possibility of larger bins for those with additional needs, an audit of assisted collections; action taken against those who do not recycle, education and communication around recycling, what is being left behind by the recycling collectors, the need to address public concerns over the proposal and issues around recycling for those living in flats.

Resolved: that the Executive agreed a public consultation on 3-weekly residual waste collections commencing in March 2024.

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 90 Parking Management Strategy, Action Plan and introduction of parking charges

Councillor Young presented the report which highlighted the reasoning behind the introduction of a parking management strategy, action plan and the introduction of parking charges. She noted that the council was faced with challenging financial and environmental times and decisions had to be made around services currently provided for free of which parking was one. There was a cost of providing parking which was borne by all taxpayers and an environmental cost with car usage back to pre-Covid levels. She added that a balance needed to be struck between

competing needs and priorities for visitors and residents with consideration of the impact on retail areas and the need to develop local solutions. She stressed that the consultation was genuine and engagement with residents and ward members would be key.

In discussing the report members highlighted the following areas of concern: that the report be deferred and revised as it was not ready for consultation; that the public believed it was a notification of charges rather than consultation on them; that the council needed to speak with other car park owners in towns such as Nailsea and Clevedon particularly where those car parks were free; on street parking charges and the impact on residential roads and parking; the use of a cashless facility; the need to identify the main use of each car park; concerns over the proposed shoppers' permits and the impact on encouraging the use of public transport. The Executive was asked to consider the introduction of a more general licence to use North Somerset car parks alongside the short stay permit.

In response, it was noted that the purpose of the recommendations was to allow for early consultation that there was scope for local flexibility within the Council's financial constraints and that some proposals may not go ahead. Businesses were encouraged to participate in the consultation regarding shoppers' permits and the consultation would include a variety of data collection methods to inform any future decision on charging and the use of cashless facilities.

Resolved: that the Executive

1. Agreed to commence a 6-week consultation in March 2024 on the North Somerset Parking Management Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Agreed to commence a 6-week consultation in March 2024 (alongside the parking strategy and action plan consultation) on the introduction of parking charges in locations which do not currently have charges.
3. Agreed to commence a 6-week consultation in March 2024 on introducing a short-stay car park permit, as part of the recommendations, available to North Somerset residents to offer an alternative for regular users of car parks.

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 91 Q2 Performance and risk update

Resolved: that the report be noted.

EXE 92 Forward Plan dated 1 February 2024

Resolved: that the Forward Plan be noted.

EXE 93 Matters referred to the Executive and not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 94 West of England Sub-Region: items not dealt with elsewhere on this agenda

None.

EXE 95 Oral reports of Executive Councillors

The Chairperson noted that minor changes had been made to Executive Members' portfolios to clarify reporting lines in respect of the Place Directorate responsibilities. These would be reflected on the council's website.

EXE 96 Urgent business permitted by the Local Government Act 1972 (if any)

None.

Chairperson
