

SOUTH HAMS COUNCIL



Minutes of a meeting of the **South Hams Council** held on **Thursday, 30th June, 2016** at **2.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber - Follaton House**

Present: **Councillors:**

Chairman Cllr Smerdon
Vice Chairman

Cllr Baldry	Cllr Bastone
Cllr Blackler	Cllr Bramble
Cllr Brazil	Cllr Brown
Cllr Cane	Cllr Foss
Cllr Gilbert	Cllr Green
Cllr Hawkins	Cllr Hicks
Cllr Hitchins	Cllr Hodgson
Cllr Holway	Cllr Hopwood
Cllr May	Cllr Pearce
Cllr Pennington	Cllr Pringle
Cllr Rowe	Cllr Saltern
Cllr Tucker	Cllr Vint
Cllr Ward	Cllr Wingate
Cllr Wright	

In attendance:

Councillors:

Officers:

Catherine Bowen
Steve Jordan

Executive Director Head of Paid
Service

21. **Bridget Green**

21/16

Since this was the first Council meeting since Bridget Green (Strategic Planning Specialist) sadly passed away, the Chairman paid tribute to her.

As a mark of respect, the Council then proceeded to stand and observe a moment's reflection.

22. **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

22/16

In light of the Vice-Chairman representing the Council at Bridget's funeral, nominations were invited to serve as Vice-Chairman for the duration of this meeting.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That Cllr D Brown be appointed Vice-Chairman for the duration of this meeting.

23. **Chairman's Announcements**

23/16

The Chairman advised of the following updates:

1. A diary change for the Audit Committee and Special Council meetings to be held on Thursday, 28 July 2016 had been agreed. The start times of these meeting had been swapped and the Special Council meeting would now start at 10.00am on this day, with the Audit Committee meeting starting at 2.00pm; and
2. Following the recent EU Referendum result, the Chairman called upon the Leader of Council to read a short statement (as outlined below):

"It is too early to say what the impact of the recent EU Referendum result will have on the operation of this Council, including future funding, as there is much to consider by the government.

We are already in contact with colleagues from the Local Government Association, who have recently issued a statement regarding the 'Leave' vote.

We will however monitor developments over the coming months and advise members of any significant changes to government policy if they are likely to affect the business of the Council,

including any changes to the Devolution agenda.

It is however important that we continue with our current strategy of focusing on improving services and creating financial sustainability so that we can continue to deliver those services that we know are important to our communities”.

3. The Council noted that the consultation on the Joint Local Plan was to be launched on Friday, 1 July 2016. During this consultation phase, an awareness campaign and public roadshows would be held. The deadline for responses would expire on 12 August 2016 and, as part of this process, Members were asked to encourage local residents and stakeholders to make their representations.

24. **Declarations of Interest**

24/16

Members and officers were invited to declare any interests in the items of business to be considered during the course of the meeting but none were made.

25. **Transitional Resources Report**

25/16

A report was considered that provided Members with the rationale for temporary, fixed term transitional resources to improve customer satisfaction and public perception of the Council.

In discussion, reference was made to:-

- (a) the role of Executive Members during the Transformation Programme. Whilst supportive of these temporary measures, a Member expressed his deep concerns that the Executive had let the situation escalate to such an extent that drastic remedial measures were now necessary;
- (b) the need for a review of the Programme to be undertaken. An additional recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** as follows:-

‘That a full review of the Transformation Programme be undertaken before the end of Quarter 1 2017 (March 2017).’

In discussion on the addition, the proposer and seconder felt that a review would be useful in order to consider how the Programme had evolved to date and whether or not

some tweaks were now required. In contrast, other Members highlighted that a review had prompted this agenda item and questioned the need for a further review at this time. Regardless of this request, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel commented that there was every likelihood that the Panel would, at the appropriate point, request a review when setting its own future work programme.

When put to the vote, the addition was declared **LOST**.

- (c) the proposals reflecting the concerns raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Some Members were of the view that these proposals had been raised at a number of Panel meetings and could have been brought forward sooner. However, other Members acknowledged that, in reality, the detailed evidence based work carried out by officers to develop these proposals was very time consuming and the timescales were therefore not unreasonable;
- (d) the annual budget setting process. A Member was unhappy that such decisions were being taken outside of the annual budget setting process and was of the view that all Members needed to be more rigorous in considering how the Council spent its monies;
- (e) the current pressures on Council staff. A number of Members made reference to the staff survey findings and the consequent need to approve these proposals in order to relieve some of the work pressures on staff.

It was then:

RESOLVED

1. That the use of transitional resources to improve service levels and customer satisfaction be approved;
2. That the use of funding of £267,000 (as per paragraph 5.4 of the presented agenda report) be approved from the New Homes Bonus funding which was originally earmarked for Disabled Facilities Grants, to fund the transitional resources as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report;
3. That the re-investment of £278,972 be approved from the 2016/17 Budget Surplus Contingency Earmarked Reserve of £767,995

(the 2016/17 budget surplus was generated by T18 savings), to fund the transitional resources as set out in Appendix A of the presented agenda report; and

4. That the capital budget allocation for 2016/17 for Disabled Facilities Grants be revised to £750,000 (as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the presented agenda report), to be funded by £552,000 allocation from the Better Care Fund and £198,000 from New Homes Bonus funding.

Upon the conclusion of this agenda item, the Head of Paid Service acknowledged the concerns raised by Members and advised that officers recognised the need for demonstrable improvements and gave an assurance that these would be made.

26. **Review of Group Manager Salaries**

26/16

A report was considered that sought to recommend increasing the salaries of the Group Managers for Commercial Services and Support Services, initially on an interim basis, to reflect the additional responsibilities taken on since the departure of the Group Manager for Customer First.

In discussion, the following points were raised:-

- (a) A number of Members put on record their belief that the two officers in question did an excellent job and worked tirelessly for the Council. In the ensuing debate, this view was also extended to include the amounts of work undertaken by the two Executive Directors.

In acknowledging staff workloads, there were some concerns raised over the duty of care for the wellbeing of these officers. The Head of Paid Service replied and assured the Council that he recognised the importance of staff welfare;

- (b) When considering workloads, a Member was of the strong view that the Group Manager for Customer First should be replaced. In reply, the Head of Paid Service advised that the decision ultimately rested with the Executive Directors, however the review would be based upon operational need;

- (c) A Member advised that Local Government Association best practice recommended the establishment of a Remuneration Committee and he proceeded to express his regret that the Council did not currently have one such Committee. In response, the Head of Paid Service confirmed that he would look into this further and report back to Members in due course.

It was then:

RESOLVED

That the new salary levels for the Group Managers for Commercial Services and Support Services be approved on the terms as outlined at paragraph 3.1 of the presented agenda report.

27. **Reports of Bodies**

27/16

- (a) **Overview and Scrutiny Panel – 2 June 2016**
- (b) **Executive – 16 June 2016**

E.04/16: Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme

RESOLVED

1. That agreement be given to the Council participating in the national Syrian Vulnerable Person's Relocation Scheme (SVRPS);
2. That the existing Private Sector Lease scheme and the existing Council Direct Lets scheme be used for the purposes of resettlement, in accordance with the SVRPS; and
3. That any specific details for the scheme be delegated to the COP Lead for Housing, Revenues and Benefits, in consultation with the Leader of Council and the Customer First Portfolio Holder.

E.05/16: Admiral Court, Dartmouth Phase 4 – Business Case

RESOLVED

That expenditure of up to £600,000 be approved (as detailed in the presented agenda report to the Executive) so as to develop commercial units at Admiral Court, Dartmouth.

E.06/16: K2 Masterplan, Kingsbridge

RESOLVED

That expenditure of £76,000 be approved from the Land and Development Earmarked Reserve to enable the appointment of a Lead Consultant to develop a comprehensive Masterplan for Kingsbridge Quay and environs (known as K2).

E.09/16: Reports of Other Bodies

(a) (i) O&S.6/16 Dartmouth Lower Ferry – Tariff Review

RESOLVED

That the proposed charges (as detailed in Appendix A of the presented agenda report to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel) be approved, subject to incorporation of the following amendment:

- That the child single tariff, proposed to increase to 60p, remain at 50p.

The Meeting concluded at 3.20 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
