

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on Monday, 16 November 2020 held online via Microsoft Teams commencing at 6.30 pm.

SCRUTINY BOARD COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Philip Ham (Chair) and Chris Inchley (Deputy Chair)
Alison Barkshire, Adam Boyden, Michael Dunk, Drew Gardner,
Barbi Lund, Janine Nash, Sam Phripp, Lois Rogers, Helen
Sprawson-White and Nigel Woolcombe-Adams

SUBSTITUTES PRESENT:

Councillor Eve Berry substituted for Councillor Terry Napper
Councillor Peter Goater substituted for Councillor Nick Cottle

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Josh Burr, Simon Carswell, John Clarke, Shane Collins,
Michael Gay, Edric Hobbs, Damon Hooton, Helen Kay, Garfield
Kennedy, Tom Killen, Liz Leyshon, Matt Martin, Barry O'Leary, Tom
Ronan, Heather Shearer, Lucie Taylor-Hood, Alan Townsend, Laura
Waters, Ros Wyke

OFFICERS:

Tracy Aarons	Deputy Chief Executive and Lead Officer
Richard Bates	Section 151 Officer
Stuart Brown	Chief Executive
Dave Burn	Democratic Services Manager
David Clark	Monitoring Officer
Julie Jackson	Performance and Improvement Officer
Kelly Knight	Economic Development and Scrutiny Officer
Julie Reader-Sullivan	Group Manager, Planning and Growth Services
Sarah Skirton	Group Manager, Corporate Services
Ben Sugg	Democratic Services Officer
Haylee Wilkins	Group Manager, Neighbourhood Services

Agenda Item	Subject	Actioned By
1	Chair's Announcements The Chair began by welcoming participants to the meeting and highlighted that it would follow the established rules for virtual meetings. The Chair announced that due to public participation he would re-order the agenda so that the Urgent Business Item 12 would be taken after Item 7.. However for ease of reference, the items	

	<p>are minuted in the order in which they appeared on the agenda.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council requested to address the Scrutiny Board. The Chair authorised the request wand handed over to the Leader.</p> <p>The Leader advised that the subject of the call-in was an important issue for the council and it as on that basis that she thought it would be helpful if she made a very clear statement.</p> <p>She said that this council was a different type of council, where people come first, and one which listens and reflects and welcomes transparency. She said that they had made a commitment to the first Social Housing programme in two decades. She said there is a housing crisis and that we need homes for local people and to end the historical record of nothing being done. She continued that we need to work together and be innovative.</p> <p>The Leader then made it clear that she would, without hesitation, accept the recommendation to refer the Social Housing report back to cabinet.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Leader for her contribution.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Cottle and Terry Napper.</p> <p>It was reported that Councillor Peter Goater was substituting for Councillor Nick Cottle and that Councillor Eve Berry was substituting for Councillor Terry Napper.</p> <p>A roll call was then completed.</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Councillor Nigel Woolcombe-Adams declared an interest in Item 12, due to being a non-executive director of Aster Communities.</p> <p>Councillor Eve Berry declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Item 12 as the item covered a matter in her ward and her parents were buried in Easthill Cemetery.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Janine Nash declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in Item 12 as the item covered a matter in her ward.</p>	
4	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Items on the agenda:</p> <p>The following speakers had requested to speak on the topic of the Urgent Business Scrutiny Board call-in: Cabinet Decision 02.11.20 - Affordable and Social Housing Delivery Programme</p> <p>1. Ms Bharati Pardy</p> <p>Ms Pardy said that she wished to challenge the mis-representation of her public speaking at the meeting of Cabinet on 2 November. She did not agree with Councillor Wyke who had said that as she had spoken it meant that residents had been informed about the proposal. Ms Pardy said this was not the case. There had been no formal notice from the council to local residents about the possibility of the land being developed.</p> <p>In summary, she believed that the decision made by Cabinet at the meeting on 2 November was made in the absence of sufficient information to make an informed decision.</p> <p>2. Mr Simon Pugh-Jones</p> <p>Mr Pugh-Jones said that Mendip District Council should not consider important sites of bio-diversity, such as Easthill, along with car parks, in their assessment of suitable sites for Social Housing. He said they should have commissioned a full ecological survey before they could consider any decision. As there are veteran trees at the location, this would mean that a full bio-diversity assessment should have been carried out. He was pleased with Mendip's Climate Change Strategy but felt that this strategy had not been considered at all in the case of Easthill.</p> <p>3. Ms Denise Wyatt</p> <p>Ms Wyatt was very dubious about the timing of this development as the funding had been granted 2 years ago, and at the end of 2020, the timeframe in which it could be spent, would expire.</p>	

	<p>She said that Members of Somerset Independents had commissioned an audit of Mendip District Council by Ernst and Young for its lack of openness and transparency in its purchase of commercial properties. She was therefore not surprised that the council had not been open in its decision making regarding Easthill.</p> <p>4. Mr Simon Bishop</p> <p>Mr Bishop spoke of his concerns. He said that the site had previously had local Green Space Designation and still met the criteria set out by the National Planning Policy Framework. He asked why the Green Space designation had been removed by Mendip District Council and how could it have been removed so easily?</p> <p>He also asked what Mendip's policy was on selecting a developer and why Aster was the only developer that had been approached? He wanted to know what the site had been valued at and how much Aster had offered to pay for it. He was concerned that the deal would offer long term value for money.</p> <p>He agreed with other speakers that it seemed very rushed through, and that he suspected this was due to the possibility of Mendip District Council losing the funding for the project.</p> <p>Councillor Phripp then made a point of order. He said that as there had been a number of public participants interested in Item 12, which had become Item 7a, he proposed moving Item 7a to be brought forward for discussion to before Item 5. This was seconded by Councillor Chris Inchley.</p> <p>This was approved.</p> <p>Items not on the agenda:</p> <p>None</p>	
5	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>Councillor Barbi Lund suggested the following changes to the previous minutes, under the paragraph that starts, "Other issues included:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P9 para 5 bullet 1: Insert the words in bold so that it reads: <i>There was a need to</i> 	Helen Bowen

put **substantially** more emphasis on the leadership, action and funding required from government and our councils **and that the policy and economic framework needs to change in order to achieve lasting solutions at sufficient scale**” rather than, “There was a need to put more emphasis on the leadership, action and funding required from government and our councils”

- Alter P9 para 5 bullet 2 so that it reads, “The strategy **is** over-reliant on community and individual efforts” rather than “The strategy **may be** over-reliant on community and individual efforts”.
- P9 para 5 bullet 4 – “Further concern about how the strategy, including its actions and outcomes, would be managed and monitored.” Please add, “This is partly due to the complexity of the relationship between the 63 Strategy Outcomes, the actions in the Initial Action Plan and the separate and different actions in the reports for the Thematic Sectors as well as lack of clarity as to who will have responsibility for delivery.”
- New 5th bullet which reads, “Concern about the complexity of the relationship between the 63 Strategy Outcomes, the actions in the Initial Action Plan and the separate and different actions in the reports for the Thematic Sectors as well as lack of clarity as to who will have responsibility for delivery.”

Councillor Michael Dunk suggested the following amendments to the minutes:

- Add the following sentence to page 10, two thirds down: “**Some members were disappointed....mentioned in the Strategy.**”
- The next sentence to read: “**It is not relevant as it forms part of an existing national strategy to de-carbonise the grid and may not even be functional by 2030**”

	<p>Councillor Dunk proposed that the previous minutes with Councillor Lund’s amendments be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Barkshire.</p> <p>Councillor Lund proposed Councillor Dunk’s amendments. This was again seconded by Cllr Barkshire.</p> <p>These proposals were approved unanimously.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meetings held on 19 October 2020 be approved.</p>	
6	<p>The Economy</p> <p>The Group Manager, Planning and Growth Services, gave a presentation on the Economy. She added that there were a number of major factors having an impact on the economy, both nationally and locally. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID • The fact that we are back in lockdown • Brexit • End of furlough <p>Members were taken through the presentation, copies of which will be circulated after the meeting. The presentation covered details on self-employment, information on redundancies and the significant impact on sectors such as tourism, retail and health care</p> <p>Questions and comments from Members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need to build a greener economy and a desire to see support, such as providing green installation providers; and • the need for advice and support. <p>Members were informed that were examples of helping to build the green economy, such as the Glastonbury Town Deal and that in terms of support, online support was being planned.</p>	Julie Reader-Sullivan

<p>7</p>	<p>Skills and Education</p> <p>The Director for Employer Engagement from Strode College, Mr David Byford, made a presentation.</p> <p>The presentation highlighted the range of support being provided as well as some of the challenges. As advised during the economy presentation, COVID has had an impact on the focus of the support provided.</p> <p>The college supported a range of sectors including engineering, hospitality, health care and tourism.</p> <p>The college had strived to support those students who had been furloughed so as to ensure they were able to complete their studies.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that there was some overlap with some of the support provided, such as apprenticeships and kick start. It was hoped there would be better integration going forward.</p> <p>Members then raised a number of queries, with replies as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that access to digital technology was important, hence why the college was building work experience, traineeships and skill development • It was confirmed that Stroud College covered Frome • Funding was available from the Government to support 'Green training' and the college was investing in this area. <p>It was reported that copies of the presentation would be circulated to Members following the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Director for Employer Engagement from Stroud College, and expressed a desire to continue the conversation.</p>	<p>Julie Reader-Sullivan</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Funding and Expenditure related to Covid-19</p> <p>The S151 Officer gave a presentation on the funding and expenditure related to Covid-19, which was update on the August position. He confirmed</p>	<p>Richard Bates</p>

that copies of the presentation would be circulated to members following the meeting.

A number of points were raised, these included:

- £51k had been allocated from the Government for enforcement and compliance
- It was difficult to estimate the impact of local track and trace measures due to the current low demand, this will be monitored
- New business grants was highlighted as a key area. They were now being paid in advance, plus a discretionary element is being put together with fellow Somerset Councils, which should go live in two – three weeks.
- Collection fund deficit for the COVID element can now be spread over three years
- Funds for rough sleepers is still awaited, with no announcement to date
- Mendip has paid £30.7m out of £33m, meaning £2.3m will need to be returned
- Business Rate relief was being refunded this year although the position for 2021/22 was uncertain
- In terms of the general fund, lost income amounted to £0.77m
- There was a risk on commercial losses estimated to be £0.70m although it was hopeful the full amount would be retrieved
- Council tax losses were also highlighted as a risk

In response to questions Members were informed that there was no specific support for Parish and Town Councils on the main scheme. On the discretionary element possibly, although it was cautioned that with limited funds Parish and Town Councils would be down the list of priority for support.

Councillor Gay requested a full list of risks to be made available prior to 3 December including Saxonvale, so that the anticipated impact on the council's performance can be assessed.

9	<p>Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-2022</p> <p>The Section 151 officer introduced the report. on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-2022 that had been delivered to Cabinet on 12 October 2020.</p> <p>The report noted that, when the current budget was approved in February 2020, the projected budget position for 2021-22 was estimated to be a gap of £4.05m. This had been very much a worst case scenario, with a pessimistic view taken of a number of issues, which had been set out in the February budget paper. This had been revisited and on a like for like basis, the current estimate was a shortfall of £1.4m.</p> <p>The report also stated that some significant decisions which would be taken nationally over the next few months which would alter this position. These include the Comprehensive Spending Review which would set the departmental spending limit for Local Government, the implementation of the Fair Funding Review which had been delayed until 2021-22 and had now been further delayed, the Finance Settlement which would not be known until late December, the reset of the Business Rates baseline and how historic growth within it would be treated, and any future support from Government for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Members were informed that business rate pooling would continue, with the likelihood that it would reduce to approximately £0.70m. The long term impact of COVID was still unclear, but there would be an impact on car park income and council tax collection.</p> <p>In response to Members the following points were clarified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the pension fund risk (item 25), some costs already borne and the rest will be phased over 25 years plus, not a single year • In terms of putting up charges (item 38) there was gap in council finances and savings were required. The approach had been suggested to avoid cutting services and reducing staff. It was accepted that it was a fine balancing act • In relation to anticipated fee increases (item 39) they were reviewed annually. This took 	Richard Bates
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	<p>account of pay rises and inflation increases, which were likely to be low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding Parish and Town Council precept (item 46) it was considered to be too early to highlight suggested costs • For surplus land (item 45) and the desire to see transparency and best value, the council has capital receipts • Regarding the funds set aside for the new unitary (item 73), it was confirmed that the authority would be expected to share costs with the authorities concerned. An update will be provided at the next meeting • <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
10	<p>Corporate Performance Management Report Quarter 2 2020-2021</p> <p>The Performance and Improvement Officer presented a report which provided a summary of the high level actions and projects that support the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2020/23 adopted on 24th February 2020 at Full Council.</p> <p>In addition, the report provided performance information in relation to Q2 2020/21 in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate complaints and praise, • Freedom of Information (FOI) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/DP (Data Protection) requests • Finance • Human Resources (HR) statistics • 5 Councils Partnership Land Charges • Housing Services (homelessness, temporary accommodation, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)) • Planning and Growth (Major, Minor and Listed Building consent) • Neighbourhood Services (Fly tipping, Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance) • Community Health Services (service requests, enforcement) • Somerset Waste Partnership (Waste and Recycling) 	Julie Jackson

	<p>The report noted that performance management had interdependencies with governance matters, such as those reported to Audit Committee. It also stated that corporate work was ongoing to ensure transparency and integration of performance and governance information.</p> <p>The report said that at the previous Scrutiny Board meeting the following recommendations for improvement had been suggested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To include the quarterly milestones for the priority actions enabling check and challenge on the RAG status 2. To include previous quarter data and historical data for comparison 3. To clarify if the measurable targets are for the current fiscal year or until the delivery date. <p>The Performance and Improvement Officer said that point 1 had been taken into consideration during conversations with Group Managers / lead officers. The updates had been checked and challenged against the quarterly milestones noted within individual business plans, and data has been provided for point 2 and 3 where applicable.</p> <p>There were no questions or observations by Members and the report was duly noted.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the contents of the report be noted</p>	
11	<p>Updates from the Scrutiny Working Groups</p> <p>The Deputy Chair advised that the membership of the Working Groups required review, as some Members had moved on to other positions. The Lead Officer said that she would be approaching Scrutiny Board Members soon to ask which working group they may wish to join, but also mentioned that they were looking for a lead for the Contracts working group.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair said that as Members had been provided with reports from the working groups prior to the meeting, he would not go through each individually but asked whether there were any questions. There were no questions so the reports were duly noted.</p>	

12

Urgent Business

The Chair of the Scrutiny Board had agreed that the following item should be considered as Urgent Business:

Scrutiny Board call-in: Cabinet Decision 02.11.20 - Affordable and Social Housing Delivery Programme

The Chief Executive had written a report which had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. The report stated that in accordance with Section 8 of the Council's Constitution, four Members of the Scrutiny Board had called in Cabinet's decision of the 2 November 2020 in relation to the Affordable & Social Housing Delivery Programme. At its meeting on the 2 November 2020 Cabinet had agreed to:

1. Approve the proposed transfer of land to Aster, subject to planning, for development of affordable and social housing.
2. Note that North Parade Car Park Frome was being investigated as a possible pilot scheme for modular housing

Cabinet took the decision in order to progress one of the Council's Priority Projects, Affordable and Social Housing Initiatives, as set out in the 2020-2023 Corporate Plan. It was acknowledged that many rental properties within the District were currently unaffordable for local people and the lack of genuinely affordable housing was a significant issue for young people. It also recognised the importance of being seen to appropriately allocate the Land Release Funding that had been successfully obtained in order for the Council to be in a strong position to secure any future funding opportunities.

The report continued that following Cabinet's decision on 2 November 2020, as set out above, four Members of the Scrutiny Board submitted a request to call this decision in on the following grounds:

- a. It contravened the following principles of good decision-making:

ii. proper consultation and the taking of professional advice from officers

iv. a presumption in favour of openness

- b. It is not in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework

The four Members indicated that their request was specifically in relation to the transfer of the Easthill site in Frome for a potential 77 dwellings.

The report assessed the specifics for the call-in under each of the grounds cited above and then gave an assessment of the call-in criteria. The Monitoring Officer advised that the criteria for call-in that could be accepted was under the presumption in favour of openness.

The report recognised that because the Cabinet meeting reports and agenda had not made it fully clear on the location and extent of the sites being discussed, that there may be an argument that, in relation to members of the public, this ground for call-in, may have been met.

Scrutiny Board was asked to agree, in the light of the further information included in the report and gained through the debate at the meeting, that:

- a) It accepted the Cabinet decision of the 2 November 2020 in respect of the Affordable & Social Housing Delivery Programme, and such decision then coming into immediate effect.

OR

- b) The Cabinet's decision of the 2 November 2020 in respect of Affordable & Social Housing Delivery Programme be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds of *a presumption in favour of openness* and would provide Cabinet with an explanation of those concerns.

When the item was brought forward for discussion, the Chief Executive said the report was self-explanatory and that as the Leader had made a statement at the start of the meeting which was consistent with recommendation to refer the matter back to Cabinet, he suggested that Members may

wish to consider just that recommendation in light of the Leaders comments.

The Chair was informed that there were a number of Members wishing to speak and that Councillor Inchley wished to make a proposal. Councillor Inchley proposed that recommendation b be adopted and that the Cabinet's decision of the 2 November 2020 in respect of Affordable & Social Housing Delivery Programme be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration. Councillor Sam Phripp seconded the proposal. He said that as the Leader had stated she was happy for the paper to go back to Cabinet he felt there was no reason for an extensive debate on the matter.

Some Members indicated that despite the advice, they wished to be given the opportunity to speak on the matter. On advice from the Monitoring Officer, who said that as there was already a substantive motion on the table, a vote should be taken. The Chair advised that a named vote should take place.

Some Members voiced that their concerns that in their opinion this was incorrect and re-iterated that they should be given a chance to speak before the vote was taken.

The Monitoring Officer then made it clear that the Scrutiny Board could list their reasons for returning the item to Cabinet and advised that the Board was voting on recommendation b in the report, to refer the matter back to Cabinet. The vote was taken on recommendation b as follows:

Alison Barkshire	For
Eve Berry	For
Adam Boyden	For
Michael Dunk	For
Drew Gardner	For
Peter Goater	For
Chris Inchley	For
Barbi Lund	For
Janine Nash	For
Sam Phripp	For
Lois Rogers	For
Helen Sprawson-White	For
Nigel Woollcombe-Adams	For
Philip Ham	

Councillor Ham expressed his serious concerns with the process and felt let down. He said that there had now been three meetings, including this one, at which the Scrutiny Board's consideration had been stymied and felt the Board was unable to make a difference. With this in mind, Councillor Ham advised that he would be resigning from the position of Chair of the Scrutiny Board with immediate effect.

Councillor Chris Inchley, as Deputy Chair, proceeded in the position of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Members debated the report and next steps. This included the ability to speak at Cabinet, the role of the Scrutiny Board and how Members could provide Cabinet with a list of concerns on their proposal. . The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Members would have the opportunity to present their concerns to Cabinet.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Lead Officer then asked Members to make statements or raise questions which could inform the reasoning for referral back to Cabinet.

Councillor Boyden summarised the reasons for referral back to Cabinet, as he saw them, as follows:

- Cabinet needs to be aware of the environmental value of the Easthill site
- Members need to see the consultants reports to help establish the suitability for development
- There was a lack of information presented to Cabinet
- What about alternative sites and approaches?

Councillor Gardner spoke of his concerns. He said that the briefing given to Members at Cabinet was inaccurate. It essentially illustrated a hedge and a gate. He also felt that Cabinet needed to be able to demonstrate that we are getting best value for the transfer of land to Aster.

Councillor Phripp wished to emphasise that he had not intended to try and shut down any debate on

this matter. He said he was happy that Cabinet would get another chance to review all the information and make a more informed decision. Councillor Woollcombe-Adams said that the ecological issues with the site were vital and must be discussed. He also pointed out that if Cabinet has failed to follow their own asset disposal policy then such a decision could be subject of judicial review.

Councillor Berry, advised that her concerns related to the fact the decision was rushed through and there was a lack of information presented to Cabinet. She said Tree Preservation Orders on the site demonstrated that any development would be severely restricted, and she also questioned whether Cabinet was aware of what was being sacrificed in the event of the site being developed. She concluded that the development would fragment wildlife corridors and that it would be contrary to the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy.

These concerns were repeated by many other Members. Councillor Kay also pointed out that the briefing had suggested that Frome Town Council had been consulted, but this was not the case. She said that drainage issues were vitally important and must be considered in how any development would impact upon the adjacent land and nature reserve.

There was discussion among Members about whether the item could be brought back to Full Council as opposed to Cabinet, and some felt the Constitution allowed for this. The Monitoring Officer reiterated his advice from the report.

The financial implications of the project were also highlighted, and questions were asked about why only one housing developer had been identified. There was a strong feeling amongst the Board that there needed to be transparency and that the Council must ensure value for money. Councillor Gay added that the public must be properly consulted before a decision could be made.

Councillor Ham reiterated his dissatisfaction with the whole process and many of the concerns brought to his attention had not been discussed. He said that Members were still wishing to speak

	<p>on the matter and that he felt it had been controlled by officers and would be making an official complaint.</p> <p>The Deputy Chair then summarised the reasons for referral back to Cabinet as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of information on environmental assessments 2. Ecological concerns 3. Best value for money 4. Drainage issue 5. Lack of consultation 6. Consideration of alternative sites <p>At the end of the discussion there was a motion from Councillor Gardner to ask if Members if they felt this decision was made in accordance with the Budget and Framework Policy. Again, the Monitoring Officer explained that this was not possible, under the Constitution and that the grounds accepted for the Call-In was on the basis of a presumption in favour of openness, as previously advised. Referring the matter back to cabinet was therefore the only course of action open to the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That Cabinet’s decision of the 2 November 2020, in respect of Affordable & Social Housing Delivery Programme, be referred back to Cabinet for reconsideration on the grounds of <i>a presumption in favour of openness</i> and would provide Cabinet with an explanation of those concerns.</p> <p>The concerns debated by Scrutiny Board were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of information on environmental assessments 2. Ecological concerns 3. Best value for money 4. Drainage issue 5. Lack of consultation 6. Consideration of alternative sites 	
13	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>It was proposed by Councillor Inchley and seconded by Councillor Helen Sprawson-White and unanimously</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the press and public from the meeting during item 14 on the grounds that exempt information (as defined in Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972) of the following description was likely to be disclosed:</p> <p>Category 3, information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including those of the Council).</p> <p>Live Streaming was switched off and confirmed by the Democratic Services Officer.</p>	
<p>14</p>	<p>5 Council Partnership Update</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer gave a verbal report on the 5 Council Partnership.</p> <p>He said that the 5 Council's contract with Capita continues to be reviewed and following the most recent review it had been determined that Procurement and Exchequer Services would exit the contract on the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement Services – 31 December 2020 • Exchequer Services – 31 March 2021 <p>He said that Capita would continue to support any existing procurement projects that were currently advertised to the market until the end of December 2020. After then, there would be a managed handover of these projects.</p> <p>Regarding the Exchequer service he said there would be a significant volume of work completed over the next 5 months to prepare for exit. A project team were already engaged in delivery of this activity. The outcomes of exit would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In house Accounts Payable and Receivable Team. • An upgrade of the Financial Management System Agresso which will be known as Unit4 Business World. The upgraded software will be cloud hosted providing added benefits to the authority. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An upgrade to the Income Management system which will provide improved functionality.• In house system admin to provide prompt issue resolution and ensure continual system development. <p>He continued that over the coming months we would be regular updates on progress. There would also be training provided to the Financial Management System user community at Mendip on how to use the new systems and who the contacts would be in case assistance was needed. As there were no existing Exchequer staff that worked solely on Mendip's accounts, there would not be any staff to TUPE. Job descriptions were currently being evaluated and the production of a timetable and project plan was underway.</p> <p>As there were no questions from Members, the Deputy Chair thanked the Monitoring Officer for his report and the meeting was duly closed.</p>	
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The meeting finished at approximately 9.30 pm.