

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on Monday, 25 January 2021 held online via Microsoft Teams commencing at 6.30 pm.

SCRUTINY BOARD COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Chris Inchley (Chair)
Alison Barkshire, Adam Boyden, Nick Cottle, Michael Dunk,
Barbi Lund (Deputy Chair) Drew Gardner, Philip Ham,
Janine Nash, Sam Phripp and Nigel Woollcombe-Adams

SUBSTITUTES PRESENT:

Councillor Eve Berry substituted for Councillor Terry Napper
Councillor Peter Goater substituted for Councillor Helen Sprawson-White

OTHER COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillors Josh Burr, Shane Collins, Michael Gay, Bente Height,
Edric Hobbs, Garfield Kennedy, Tom Killen, Liz Leyshon,
Barry O'Leary and Alan Townsend

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Tracy Aarons	Deputy Chief Executive and Lead Officer
Richard Bates	Section 151 Officer
Claire Dicken	Democratic Services Supervisor
Sarah Gooding	Democratic Services Officer
Kelly Knight	Economic Development and Scrutiny Officer
Duncan Moss	Deputy Corporate Finance Advisor
Emma Plummer	Project and Improvement Officer
Sarah Skirton	Head of Service, Corporate Services
Ben Sugg	Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

Ian Byworth	Mendip Citizens Advice
Sharon Hale	SPARK Somerset
Sarah Cummins	SPARK Somerset
Katherine Nolan	SPARK Somerset
Mickey Green	Somerset Waste Partnership

Agenda Item	Subject	Actioned By
1	Election of Chair of Scrutiny Board The Deputy Chair asked for nominations for Chair of the Scrutiny Board.	Helen Bowen

	<p>Councillor Sam Phripp nominated Councillor Chris Inchley. Councillor Janine Nash seconded the nomination.</p> <p>There were no other nominations.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That Councillor Chris Inchley be elected Chair of the Scrutiny Board</p>	
2	<p>Election of Deputy Chair of Scrutiny Board</p> <p>The Chair asked for nominations to Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Board</p> <p>Councillor Chris Inchley nominated Councillor Barbi Lund to be Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Board. Councillor Adam Boyden seconded the nomination.</p> <p>There were no other nominations.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That Councillor Barbi Lund be elected Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Board</p>	Helen Bowen
3	<p>Chair's Announcements</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Board for their nominations. He began by welcoming participants to the meeting and highlighted that it would follow the established rules for virtual meetings.</p>	
4	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Lois Rogers, Terry Napper and Helen Sprawson-White</p> <p>The Chair wished Councillor Helen Sprawson-White a speedy recovery from her recent illness.</p>	
5	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p>	

6	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>Items on the agenda: None</p> <p>Items not on the agenda: None</p>	
7	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</p> <p>Members agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 should be re-ordered to reflect the order in which the items were considered, so that it is was clear that the previous Chair had resigned earlier in the meeting than is currently the impression. It was highlighted that at the end of item 12. (Item 12 had been brought forward and considered after item 7). which was taken earlier in the meeting than the minutes appeared to show.</p> <p>Members also agreed that at the end of item 10 on page 11 it should be noted that Councillor Barbi Lund thanked the Performance and Improvements Officer for incorporating changes as requested.</p> <p>Subject to these amendments Councillor Chris Inchley proposed that the previous minutes be approved. This was seconded by Councillor Barbi Lund.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 be approved as an accurate record of the proceedings, subject to the following amendments:</p> <p>Change the order of the minutes to reflect the order in which they were discussed, thus moving item 12 immediately after item 7.</p> <p>Remove the following sentence in item 1, paragraph 2 "However for ease of reference, the items are minuted in the order in which they appeared on the agenda."</p> <p>At the end of item 10 on page 11, include the following: "Councillor Barbi Lund thanked the Performance and Improvements Officer for incorporating changes as requested."</p>	<p>Claire Dicken</p>

<p>8</p>	<p>Performance Review for Mendip Citizens Advice Voluntary Sector Partnership Funding 2020-2021</p> <p>A report had been produced which stated during the financial year of 2020/21 the Council had allocated core funding of £98,000 and a one-off payment of £6,000 Local Assistance Scheme (LAS) funding to our strategic voluntary sector partner Mendip Citizens Advice.</p> <p>This report was accompanied a presentation by Ian Byworth, Chief Executive Officer of Mendip Citizens Advice. The presentation covered service performance for the year to date, including the impact of COVID 19.</p> <p>During the discussion that followed, various points were made including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the service in Frome may move when the lease on their current building was up • The GP service had ceased due to funding, but it was hoped that access to citizens advice would be accessible via GP surgeries in the future • Citizens advice staff met routinely with Officers of Mendip District Council for scrutiny and assessment of the service • Councillors were welcome to approach the Citizens Advice team whenever they wished to do so • Members noted that Mendip Citizens Advice had good connections with the Housing Team at Mendip. • The Council Tax Team could also connect with the Citizens Advice Team to deal with individual client needs • Members noted the impact of COVID 19 on some residents in the area in terms of loss of earnings and fuel poverty • There was a discussion about funding of the Mendip Citizens Advice • There was also a discussion about Universal Credit <p>The Chair thanked Mr Byworth for his presentation, which had been very well received by Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>To note the presentation.</p>	<p>Emma Plummer</p>
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<p>9</p>	<p>Performance Review for SPARK Somerset Voluntary Sector Partnership Funding 2020-21</p> <p>A report had been produced which stated the Council had allocated core funding to our partner SPARK Somerset of £25,000 for the financial year 2020/21.</p> <p>This report was accompanied a presentation given by Sharon Hale, Sarah Cummins and Katherine Nolan from SPARK Somerset. The presentation covered service performance for the year to date including the impact of COVID 19.</p> <p>During the discussion that followed, various points were made including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How SPARK may be able to help find support for young carers as there appeared to be a gap in services <p>The Chair thanked Sharon Hale, Sarah Cummins and Katherine Nolan for their presentation, which had been very well received by Members.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>To note the presentation.</p>	<p>Emma Plummer</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Somerset Waste Partnership Draft Business Plan 2021-2026, Draft 2021/22 Budget</p> <p>The relevant Portfolio Holder was invited to introduce a report had been produced to set out the Somerset Waste Partnership's Draft Business Plan 2021-2026. The plan provided a framework within which the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) could make decisions and steer the delivery of waste partnership services.</p> <p>Mickey Green, Manager at Somerset Waste Partnership gave a presentation.</p> <p>During the discussion that followed, various points were made including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the extreme cold weather was a challenge for the waste collection teams. • Members felt the Recycle More project had gone well. 	<p>Haylee Wilkins</p>

- How could manufacturers be persuaded not to use plastic wrappers which could not be recycled. Members noted this was a national issue. The Somerset Waste Partnership was sometimes involved in lobbying for national change.
- With reference to the challenges and opportunities chart, how the performance was managed in detail.
- Fly Tipping and the impact of COVID 19
- It looked likely that the ownership of SUEZ may change, but there were many safeguards in the contract to protect the service and as such there is little risk to the current service provided.
- The impact of Brexit on the service and the suppliers that it relied upon including parts and vehicles.
- Making the most of learning from best practice and partnership working.
- That reuse was better than recycling and the Board looked forward to this part of the plan.

The Chair thanked Mr Green for his presentation, which had been very well received by Members.

Councillor Chris Inchley proposed that the recommendations in the report be approved. Councillor Peter Goater seconded the proposal which was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- To approve the draft Business Plan 2021-2026 and the annual budget 2021-22 for onward agreement of Cabinet.
- To note the changes to garden waste payments will be processed in 2021,
- To approve the renewal of the delegation of powers to SWP subject to confirmation from the appropriate Officer(s) that SWP's Advice, Support & Enforcement Policy to be provided in due course is compliant with the constitution and legislation to delegate such power. The appropriate Officer be authorised to approve this delegation.

11	<p>COVID 19 Funding and Expenditure</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer had produced a report which stated that as a result of COVID 19 the funding received would not cover all the costs incurred by the Council.</p> <p>At the time of writing the report the current estimate was that under the current Government schemes, the Council would face a shortfall of between £1.2 million and £2.6 million. This consisted of our share of income losses, 100% of commercial income losses and reductions in business rates received via the pooling arrangements.</p> <p>Any losses borne by the Council would need to be met from in-year savings in the revenue budget or from the Council's usable reserves which stood at £12.7m at the start of this financial year.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	Richard Bates
12	<p>Budget Reports for Scrutiny</p> <p>The Section 151 Officer had produced a suite of reports which allowed for scrutiny of the budget proposals ahead of the Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>The three reports were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Medium Term Financial Plan 2021-22 to 2023-24 and detailed Revenue Budget for 2021-22 2) 2021-22 to 2025-26 Capital Strategy and 2021-22 Detailed Capital Investment Programme 3) Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy (Audit & Cabinet paper) <p>The Section 151 Officer went on to say the Council was in a position to produce a balanced budget for 2021-22 with no reduction in services.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officer for the reports.</p> <p>In response to queries the Officer explained the procedures with regard to applications for funding as a result of COVID 19. Members noted that losses as a result of commercial tenants of the</p>	Richard Bates

	<p>Council who fell into arrears would ultimately be borne by the tax payer.</p> <p>With regard to markets the Officer explained what resources were available. The Head of Service, Community Health would be able to answer specific questions with regard to this and Members should contact her outside of the meeting for further information.</p> <p>The Officer confirmed that in his opinion, Mendip's borrowing appeared to be within manageable limits.</p> <p>Members noted that whilst plans could be made, finances in the current circumstances were changing constantly. The Officer said that up to date information would be given to Members as the changes occurred. The reports contained the most current information to date.</p> <p>The Officer confirmed the Treasury Management Strategy paper to Cabinet would include detail of the latest MRP.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officer for his reports.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the contents of the reports be noted and that feedback to be passed on to Cabinet.</p>	
13	<p>Updates from the Scrutiny Working Groups</p> <p>Reports by each of the Working Group Lead Convenors:</p> <p>a. Policies and Strategies working group: Nothing to report.</p> <p>b. Contracts working group: Nothing to report.</p> <p>c. Access working group: The group would be meeting the following day</p> <p>d. Deprivation working group: Members noted the notes which had been circulated with the agenda.</p>	

	<p>Members requested information on the new Electric Vehicle Charges Contract whenever it was available.</p> <p>Members noted the Contracts Working Group had been set up to review existing contracts rather than new contracts.</p> <p>It was agreed that Councillor Drew Gardner would raise the issue of vehicle charges at the next meeting of the Access Working Group. In addition to this it was noted that the Climate Emergency and Ecology Group (CEEG) had begun work on the how to make provision of vehicle charging.</p> <p>Members noted COVID 19 had had an impact on the work of the Working Groups. The Lead Officer said she would report to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board on the work of the groups as a whole, including recommendations for the future.</p>	<p>Haylee Wilkins</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>None.</p>	

The meeting finished at approximately 9.30 pm.