

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on Thursday, 15 April 2021 by Live Stream, commencing at 6.30pm.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT:

Councillor Helen Sprawson-White (Chair)

Councillors Rob Ayres, Alison Barkshire, Adam Boyden, Josh Burr, Simon Carswell, Shane Collins, Nick Cottle, Jon Cousins, Michael Dunk, Drew Gardner, Michael Gay, Peter Goater, Francis Hayden, Steve Henderson, Edric Hobbs, Chris Inchley, Helen Kay, Garfield Kennedy, Liz Leyshon, Barbi Lund, Lindsay MacDougall, Matt Martin, Janine Nash, Barry O'Leary, Sam Phripp, Richard Pinnock, Tom Ronan, Heather Shearer, Lucie Taylor-Hood, and Ros Wyke

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Tracy Aarons	Deputy Chief Executive
Richard Bates	S151 Officer
Helen Bowen	Democratic Services Officer
Stuart Brown	Chief Executive
Dave Burn	Interim Democratic Services Manager
Elizabeth Dawson	Commercial Transformation Manager
Lesley Dolan	Principal Lawyer and Practise Manager SHAPE Legal
Sarah Gooding	Democratic Services Officer
Ally Laing	Senior Media and Communications Officer
Claire Malcolmson	Head of Service - Community Health Services
Elizabeth Price	Strategic Marketing and Media Manager
Sara Skirton	Head of Service- Corporate Services
Ben Sugg	Democratic Services Officer
Haylee Wilkins Services	Assistant CEO and Head of Service for Neighbourhood Services

ALSO, IN ATTENDANCE:

Tim Pope	PA Consulting
Claire Tew	PA Consulting
Luke Muir	PA Consulting

Agenda Item	Subject	Actioned by
1	Chair's Announcements and Thought of The Day The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting highlighting the established rules for virtual meetings. The Chair then stated that like all of us, she was deeply saddened to hear of the death of HRH Prince Philip,	

	<p>Duke of Edinburgh. She said he was a true inspiration, dedicating his life to serve our Queen and country whilst remaining primarily a husband, father, grandfather and great grandfather. His legacy of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme had provided a sense of purpose and fun for generations of young people, my self-included.</p> <p>She was sure that Council would wish to join her in sending personal and heartfelt condolences to our Queen and the rest of The Royal Family who are bearing the huge weight of loss in the public eye.</p> <p>She asked Council to join her in a 2-minute silence, to give thanks and reflection on a lifetime of service.</p> <p>The Council observed two minutes of silence.</p>	
2	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eve Berry, Shannon Brooke, John Clarke, John Greenhalgh, Philip Ham, Bente Height, Nigel Hewitt-Cooper, Tom Killen, Terry Napper, Mike Pullin, Lois Rogers, Alan Townsend, Laura Waters and Nigel Woolcombe-Adams.</p> <p>Councillor Hooton asked for his concerns regarding the number of apologies for absence that had been submitted to be recorded. He believed the matters for discussion were of great significance to the people of Somerset.</p>	
3	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>None</p>	
4	<p>Public Participation</p> <p>a) Items on the agenda:</p> <p>Mr Andrew Pope had requested to speak on item 07 on the agenda, the Local Referendum on the Future of Local Government in Somerset. However, he withdrew his request prior to the meeting.</p> <p>b) Items not on the agenda:</p> <p>Mr Ian Jarmaine requested to address Council on the topic of business service yard parking and council office delays to PPD review.</p>	

	<p>However, due to reception difficulties it was difficult for Council to hear Mr Jarmaine clearly. The Chair requested Mr Jarmaine to submit his concerns by email and she would ensure they were sent to the relevant person for a reply.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Jarmaine for his contributions.</p>	
5	<p>Previous Minutes of Council</p> <p>Due to a query with the accuracy of the minutes the Chair of Council announced that consideration of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 February, be deferred until the next meeting.</p> <p>.</p>	Dave Burn
6	<p>Consultation on Local Government Reform – Response to “One Somerset” Proposal</p> <p>The Leader of the Council introduced the report. On 9 October 2020 the Council received a letter from The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, who had invited local authorities in Somerset to submit a proposal for a single tier of local government by 9 December 2020. Mendip along with the four district authorities had already submitted an outline business case “Stronger Somerset”, in September 2020. The final proposal for Stronger Somerset was considered by Full Council on 3 December 2020 where the Council resolved ‘to endorse the Stronger Somerset proposal for the reform of local government, including the creation of two unitary Councils within Somerset, and agree its submission to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government’.</p> <p>The County Council also submitted proposals – “<i>One Somerset</i>” in accordance with the Secretary of State’s deadline.</p> <p>The government was now consulting on both proposals.</p>	Stuart Brown

The purpose of this report was to seek endorsement of Mendip District Council's formal response to the Secretary of State on the "One Somerset" proposal, which argued for a single unitary for the whole of the administrative county of Somerset. This report detailed the planned response on behalf of Mendip District Council.

The Leader advised that all Members had been provided with the opportunity to listen and debate the proposal at the Members' Briefing on Monday 12 April 2021. Members were also given the opportunity to raise questions subsequent the Briefing. She advised that no additional questions or queries had been received.

She concluded by stating that Council needed to be mindful of the strong feelings on each side.

Councillor Hayden expressed surprise that the report had been submitted to Council given the advice provided on other 'Executive' reports.

The Leader advised that whilst the decision rested with the 'Executive' she wished to seek the view of Council given the significance of the decision.

A motion to accept the recommendations in the report was proposed by Councillor Josh Burr and seconded by Councillor Sam Phripp. The recommendations were put to the vote and declared to be carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the submission of the response to the consultation, on proposals for reform of local government in Somerset, specifically in respect of the One Somerset proposal; be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that the decision to submit the consultation response required an executive decision to be made before final submission. It was proposed that following Full Council's endorsement of the consultation response, the Leader of the Council will make the executive

	<p>decision to submit the consultation response to the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.</p>	
7	<p>Local Referendum on the Future of Local Government in Somerset</p> <p>The Chair asked the Principal Lawyer & Practice Manager, SHAPE Legal Partnership, to make an announcement regarding the need to defer this item.</p> <p>Council was informed that in light of the Secretary of State's letter received on the evening of the 12th of April, and the specific and detailed legal issues raised therein, it is necessary to obtain further legal advice by means of leading counsel's opinion to ensure members have full and thorough legal advice when reaching their decision on such a significant issue.</p> <p>Therefore, in relation to the proposed recommendations to hold a Local Referendum on the proposals for local government reorganisation in Somerset, this item will need to be deferred to a future date, in order to enable the matter to be considered further with the benefit of specific legal advice.</p> <p>The item was deferred.</p> <p><i>i. .</i></p>	Stuart Brown
8	<p>Urgent Business</p> <p>None</p>	

The meeting closed at approximately 19.05 pm