

# **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

## **CABINET**

These minutes are draft until confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting.

Thursday, 1st February, 2024

### **Present:**

Councillor Kevin Guy (Ch)	Leader of the Council, LD Group Leader, Member Advocate for Armed Forces and Veterans
Councillor Tim Ball	Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Alison Born	Cabinet Member for Adult Services
Councillor Mark Elliott	Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Paul May	Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Councillor Matt McCabe	Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development
Councillor Manda Rigby	Cabinet Member for Highways
Councillor Paul Roper	Cabinet Member for Economic and Cultural Sustainable Development
Councillor Sarah Warren	Deputy Council Leader (statutory) and Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel

### **46 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **47 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer read out the emergency evacuation procedure.

### **48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dave Wood.

### **49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Democratic Services Officer stated that Cllr Dave Wood had declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for all items on the agenda for this meeting. This was due to his employment as Chief Executive of Avon Needs Trees. Cllr Wood did not attend the meeting or the pre-meeting and did not take part in any decisions relating to the items on the agenda.

### **50 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

There was no urgent business.

## 51 QUESTIONS FROM PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS

There were 12 questions from Councillors and 2 questions from members of the public.

*[Copies of the questions and responses, including supplementary questions and responses if any, have been placed on the Minute book as Appendix 1 and are available on the Council's website.]*

## 52 STATEMENTS OR PETITIONS FROM PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS

Members of the public and Councillors made statements as follows:

- Mr and Mrs Flower – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Angharad Barber – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone. Ms Barber spoke against the SVEZ development pointing out that 600 objections have been received from a variety of organisations and individuals. She expressed concern about the proposed compulsory purchase order, harm to small businesses and increased traffic volumes. She queried whether this was the right decision in the current financial climate and urged the Council to work with and listen to the local community.
- Mrs Anne Huckle – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Margaret Heffernan – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Andy Jeffery – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone. Mr Jeffery spoke against the Enterprise Zone and expressed concern at the loss of Grade 1 agricultural land. He said that government policy is to protect this land. He also spoke about the adverse effect on local businesses including the pub trade and local retailers and stressed that the Enterprise Zone should be for industrial use and not retail use.
- James Wellman (on behalf of Cllr Ann Morgan) – Somer Valley Enterprise Zone *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Jim Plunkett-Cole – Economic Outlook for Jobs in B&NES *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Allison Herbert (Bath BID) – Economic Strategy *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Robbie Bentley – The Local Plan – Risk and Equalities *(copy attached as an appendix to these minutes)*
- Cllr Shaun Hughes – Local Plan and Economic Strategy. Cllr Hughes spoke about the lack of engagement on the SVEZ leading to confusion for local residents. He stated that the price is being paid for poor decisions in the past. Houses have been built on former industrial space. Job creation is needed due to more building in the area and local jobs are needed. On balance he

supported the SVEZ for economic reasons but would not support the use of a compulsory purchase order.

- Cllr Duncan Hounsell – The Local Plan (*copy attached as an appendix to these minutes*)
- Cllr Bharat Pankhania – The Local Plan – Combe Down Allotments. Cllr Pankhania spoke regarding the potential loss of the allotments in Combe Down. He stressed the importance of outdoor activity and the health benefits for the allotment community. He presented a petition containing 4,700 signatures and hoped that the issue can be resolved.
- Dewi Willcox – The Local Plan. Mr Willcox spoke regarding the need for the Council to do more for young people in the area who are finding it difficult to afford somewhere to live and to find well-paid local jobs. They are being forced to move away or to commute long distances to work and cannot afford the high private rents in the area.

### **53 MATTERS REFERRED BY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY BODIES**

No matters were referred by Policy Development and Scrutiny Panels.

### **54 BUILDING A FAIR, GREEN, CREATIVE AND CONNECTED BATH WITH NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

Cllr Paul Roper introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation, and made the following statement:

“We have before cabinet an ambitious new Economic Strategy which, with your support, will enable us to strengthen and diversify our local economy over the next ten years.

I feel privileged to propose the recommendations in this paper.

Despite the harsh funding restraints placed on us by central government, our administration is taking matters into its own hands to develop our local economy and communities by launching this strategy.

With this strategy, our administration is setting out our stall with a far-reaching plan to Build a Fair, Green, Creative and Connected Bath with North East Somerset.

We have worked closely with our key stakeholders over the last 18 months to shape our shared vision for our local area. We are all singing from the same hymn sheet. Together we recognise that we all have a stake in ensuring that our economy and our communities thrive.

The Economic Strategy spans the decade to 2034 and contains six pillars:

- Creating a Greener Economy that is Net Zero and Nature positive
- Supporting our residents to access Good Work
- Establishing B&NES as a centre of Inclusive innovation and creativity

- Creating Resilient Businesses by building a diverse, creative and sustainable base
- Addressing Housing Affordability and ensuring residents have access to high quality homes
- Supporting Stronger Places, building resilience and sharing prosperity more fairly

The strategy further outlines a 10-point Delivery Plan, some of which we are already delivering, for example Bath Quays and the wider Milsom Quarter Masterplan, which will be a flagship for sustainable development.

Why is this strategy so important?

It is the platform from which we can move to a fairer, sustainable and thriving future for our local area.

It forms an integral part of our larger plan. It is the blueprint we need to demonstrate that our vision is robust. The Economic Strategy opens the doors for our local authority to attract the vital funding – both private and public – that is essential to enable us to implement our plans.

There is a time-honoured saying in the business world: failing to plan is planning to fail. Now that we have the strategy and the delivery plan, we can start working on the implementation – bringing it to life.

In our local authority, we are very fortunate to have valuable Council assets like the Roman Baths. We are blessed with two outstanding universities, the Royal United Hospital, a double World Heritage classification, historic market towns, and significant businesses all in a wonderful, unique setting. For the most part, our residents are highly qualified, and unemployment is relatively low.

But not everyone in Bath and North East Somerset is sharing in our overall prosperity.

Economic growth in our area over the last ten years has been sluggish. Wages here are below the national average. Many residents are struggling with rising housing costs.

Inequalities in health and employment are growing, creating a two-tier economy.

I would like to draw particular attention to gaps in educational attainment in our area. Education is fundamental to improving young people's life chances. Unless we act, we risk consigning generations of young people to futures in which their opportunities are reduced. Cllr May will shortly be addressing this point.

Some of our residents, then, are being left behind. We cannot allow this cycle to continue.

Overshadowing everything is the climate emergency which is at the forefront of our administration's attention. Our council declared a climate emergency in 2019. We are serious about our commitment to sustainability. We must reach our carbon objectives of net zero. We are acutely aware that we must respond to the

climate emergency and do so now. Our climate emergency goals are woven into this strategy.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this and particularly our Future Ambition Board partners, who are our key stakeholders and who have worked so hard to develop this ground-breaking strategy. It is the fundamental pre-requisite to a fairer, sustainable and thriving future for our local area.”

Cllr Manda Rigby seconded the motion and made the following statement:

“The council has many responsibilities, and touches people's lives in different ways at different times. Three strands which are more or less continuous through all the middle years are where people live, where they work, and how they get between the two.

We have heard a lot recently about the councils plans for housing, and we are working very hard on future transport plans, so to add to the right homes in the right places, and enabling choice on transport, we now have in front of us an economic strategy to agree and to implement.

Bath and North East Somerset is a rich and varied landscape with historical and present links to many industries. This economic strategy balances our legacy, whilst being very forward looking, and future proofing against changing trends. As an example, the lockdown periods showed us that we had a reliance on tourists and students within the City of Bath. Absolutely we need to ensure our offer to visitors and those who choose to make Bath their home whilst studying is sustainable, appropriate and flexible to changing needs.

But we also need to ensure we also have other compelling offers and focus on other areas within the authority so that there are employment opportunities near where people live, and there are affordable housing solutions near to where the jobs are, and to minimise unnecessary travel between the two.

I welcome this strategy in front of us, as it sets out a roadmap for our economic future. Even having this plan adopted would be a good step forward. A good friend sent me a link to an article published over the weekend about the Horizon scheme, something we used to enjoy free and unfettered access to in the good old PB, pre-Brexit days, which it looks like we might be able to access again in the future. The key word here is might. The council will never have the sort of money to invest in everything needed to drive the economy, our job is to make us an attractive a place as possible to do business, ensure we focus on sustainability, stand in and correct any market failures and, if by having this policy in front of us this evening, it makes it easier for businesses to apply for grant funding, that in and of itself has to be a good thing.

I am in no doubt that Paul and his officers have worked incredibly hard on this document and are to be very highly commended, and I am very happy to second it.”

Cllr Paul May welcomed the strategy and stated that children are an essential part of our future economic drive. He noted that the report highlights the issue that whilst we have one of the most highly performing local education authority areas in the country this creates a significant issue of the size of attainment gap

for a small proportion of our children. It was important to think about our strengths within our economy to address this group of students including practical work experience, apprenticeships and working with families.

He hoped that the strategy addressing this inequality means that the Council and its partners' strengths would be used to engage effectively moving forward as a key issue within the delivery plans.

Cllr Sarah Warren stated that the council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 committing it to provide the leadership to enable the district to reach carbon neutrality, followed by an ecological emergency declaration in 2020. The package of measures we are bringing forward this evening shows how we are embedding Net Zero, Nature Positive systemically throughout our work as a Council. This agenda builds upon our Corporate Strategy embedding sustainability into all Council decision making.

She noted that the new Economic Strategy delivers on that, it is designed using the principle of doughnut economics, which aim to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet. This approach would be embedded with our partners across the district and would inform delivery across council services. The new Economic Strategy has sustainability at its heart. As success measures it focused partly on household disposable income, a measure of how the economy is working for people, as well as on carbon emissions, air quality and biodiversity.

She stated that the Strategy also sets out specific action for a greener economy including the investigation of Green Bonds, green skills development, training and apprenticeships, local green jobs and supporting businesses who want to become "net zero, nature positive" in their operations. It will promote Bath with North East Somerset as a testbed for the development of novel green technologies across transport, energy and the built environment. The Council will continue to support real choice in transport, will explore nature-based solutions to increase biodiversity and to encourage sustainable tourism and will develop a local food strategy and support the adoption of regenerative farming whilst providing support to rural businesses with diversification.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To approve the Economic Strategy.
- (2) To sign off the partnership approach to implementation and delivery of the economic strategy.

## **55 LOCAL PLAN OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Cllr Matt McCabe introduced the report, moved the officer recommendation, and made the following statement:

"Every 20 years a Local Authority gets to set a new Local Plan. This sets out the policies by which all planning decisions will be made. It also sets out where new housing will be built, what type it will be and where land will be designated for other needs, such as employment.

Today we are considering the Options Document. This primarily sets out the potential areas that could be allocated for house building, employment and renewable energy, as well as many areas of development management policy. This marks a considerable amount of effort on behalf of officers over the past year, for which I am very grateful.

It is also informed by, and will help to deliver, our Corporate Strategy and our Economic Strategy.

This huge piece of work began over a year ago, when we began talking to residents and stakeholders. It has been going through our all-party Local Development Framework Steering Group. It is worth noting that many Council Administrations do not bother to consult with other parties on the development of a new Local Plan, So, it is to the credit of all administrations here in BANES that we, as a Council, do. It is something that I am keen to maintain.

What this means is that all political groups have had the opportunity to take part in the drafting of this material, albeit on a confidential basis. So, all groups have been able to submit their initial thoughts, in advance of the public consultation.

This options document is what we are intending to put out for consultation to residents and other parties. The results of this consultation will inform the draft of our New Local Plan, and we will put that out for consultation later in the year.

There is also another timing element to consider. One of the key factors locally is the Strategic lead taken by the West of England Combined Authority, in terms of Planning for the Economy, Transport and Housing right across our region. Unfortunately, in an effort to seemingly qualify as the worst Mayor in the country, Mayor Dan Norris pulled WECA out of this regionally significant role.

This has left the four authorities rushing to complete new Local Plans, because that strategic overview is now missing. We are having to work closely with each other to try and achieve this regional co-ordination. Remember - not having a valid Local Plan in place, creates a free for all for developers. Hence the urgency. Luckily for BANES we prepared our partial update, which we completed a year ago, and it has given us a more up to date plan than our neighbouring authorities. However, this has also left us slightly behind them in preparing a new Local Plan, covering the longer term.

So, what have been our main drivers?

Well, we want to create a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy. We want to maximise the delivery of housing that is more affordable.

Clearly the government asking us to build 14,500 new homes in the authority area is a huge challenge, so this work presents sites put forward by various parties, all assessed for their suitability and sustainability.

Touching on a comment that was made earlier about that 14,500 homes – luckily for us we have some 6,000 in the pipeline and we expect over this time period to get a windfall of about 2,000 homes that we weren't expecting – that's just normal – which means we have to find 6,500 homes over the next 20 years, which is far more achievable than if we were going straight in at 14,500.

We have to respond to both the housing crisis and the affordability challenges. Our suggested, possible sites and their uses will be available for residents to have their say.

The other big driver is the Climate and Ecological Emergencies. So, we are proposing that our enhanced requirement for Net Zero in terms of energy use in new builds, now be accompanied by a new and tougher consideration for carbon neutrality in construction materials as well. We will also be testing a Biodiversity Net Gain of 20% on new builds and seeing how close we can get.

In all these matters we are treading a fine line between our aspirations and what the final planning inspector will say is viable for developers. Evidence is key, and the results of our consultations with residents, count as evidence.

In order to facilitate a robust consultation, we are creating a 'web book' approach so that participants can view the part of the plan they are interested in and indicate their stance on a matter, provide additional evidence or just make general comments, but in a way that their contributions are correctly allocated to a particular item.

There will also be hard copies in our libraries, and officers have made considerable efforts to engage with often hard to reach groups to secure their participation as well.

There is one small change to the document in front of you. As some of the supporting evidence to the Local Plan won't be published until shortly after the launch, and in order to give people a bigger say, we are going to be extending the consultation period to 8 weeks, meaning that comments can be submitted up to the 8<sup>th</sup> of April.

So, with thanks to our Planning Policy Officers, and the members of the LDF Steering Group from all parties, I ask Cabinet to approve this document for consultation."

Cllr Tim Ball seconded the motion and stated that the Local Plan is there to ensure that houses and businesses are provided in the right locations. He noted that it is important not to have political interference in this process and that cross-party support is needed. It is also important to fully consult local residents.

Cllr Sarah Warren stated that the Local Plan is an absolutely key document in ensuring that a planning authority can require sustainable, green construction and development, in sustainable locations. The options document informed by our economic strategy, and a rare opportunity that only comes along once a decade or so to set the parameters of the place that we live in for a generation. After ratifying a Local Plan Update only last January that put Bath & North East Somerset on the map with the leading net zero new build policy in England at the time, as well as ground breaking biodiversity requirements, it's exciting to have an opportunity now to take that ambition still further.

She noted that the Green Transformation Team has been working closely with their Planning Policy colleagues to develop a policy framework that will drive forward our Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration and support

development enabling Bath and North East Somerset to become carbon neutral, nature positive.

She welcomed the proposal to increase the requirement for biodiversity net gain from 10% to 20% and was particularly please with the proposed requirements around renewables. She noted that the Council continues to lead the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the West of England and Natural England have been so impressed with our leadership on green infrastructure projects including Bathscape, Waterspace, Somer Valley Rediscovered and Chew Valley Reconnected, that they have chosen to undertake further work with us.

Cllr Paul May noted the importance of working with all political parties and stressed the importance of making access to the report as easy and clear as possible.

Cllr Kevin Guy encouraged everyone to take participate in the consultation.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To agree the spatial priorities of the Local Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report for public engagement, particularly to support a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable economy and provide for more housing that is affordable.
- (2) To agree the policy and development location options set out in Appendix 1 of the report (Local Plan Options Consultation Document) as the basis for public engagement.
- (3) To agree the revisions to the B&NES Local Development Scheme outlined in paragraph 3.3 of the report.
- (4) To agree and authorise the Director for Sustainable Communities to carry out the approach to public engagement in Section 10 of the report.
- (5) To delegate authority to the Director for Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development, to agree textual changes in finalising the Local Plan Options consultation document and the revised Local Development Scheme.

## **56 SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER - COMMITMENTS**

Cllr Paul Roper introduced the reports for all three items relating to the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone and moved the officer recommendation in respect of the LDO commitments.

Cllr Roper made the following points:

- The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone is an important part of the delivery of the new Economic Strategy and is also a manifesto commitment for this administration.
- The Somer Valley Enterprise Zone is intended create around 1,300 jobs of exactly the type we aspire to. Good quality, secure, well-paid, local jobs giving residents meaningful and fulfilling employment.

- It will provide 1,300 local jobs for the towns and villages and hamlets around Paulton, Westfield, Radstock and Midsomer Norton, a population in the region of 30,000 people.
- Back in the late 1990s and early 2000s nearly all of the employment in the Somer Valley was local. Many local businesses have been lost including Great Mills DIY/Focus, Welton Bibby Bag Manufacturing and Purnells & Sons Printers which, at its height, provided 2,000 jobs. Well over 1,000 jobs have been lost in comparatively recent times.
- The consequence of this is that people now commute, census statistics from 2021 suggest that 30-50% of the economically active population in this area commute over six miles to work.
- Out-commuting means that families need at least one car and that is a huge barrier to young people and the less affluent and this limits their opportunities. More houses are also being built in the area.
- The Council needs to create opportunities and aspiration for both current and future generations in these communities.
- This authority recognised in 2007 that jobs lost needed to be replaced. This is when it originally allocated the land we are considering today as employment land. It was left to the free market to bring the development forward and it failed to do so. It is probable that delivery was seen as too complex and too expensive.
- This administration has now stepped in and what we have before us today is the mechanism by which we can deliver this pioneering project – a green business park.
- The LDO paper enables adoption of the LDO by cabinet and addresses the market failure in delivering SVEZ. It is a planning framework that, by way of compliance applications, prospective developers and businesses can seek planning permission on a de-risked basis. It gives them more certainty that an application will be approved, provided it meets with the strict criteria enshrined in the LDO. The LDO does not remove planning restrictions - it defines them in advance, giving businesses certainty as to what they need to do to make a successful application.
- To enable the LDO to be brought forward to approval today, there has been a process that the planning authority has been through to ensure the scheme is compliant with all local and national policies.
- These policies and statutory consultees include an environmental impact assessment, Ecology, Arboriculture, Air quality, Conservation, Archaeology, Highways, Drainage and Flood Risk and many more. The list of hurdles this scheme has had to pass is extensive and the Local Planning Authority report has confirmed policy compliance.
- The administration believe that it has addressed the environmental issues to the best of our abilities and to a high standard whilst keeping the site commercially viable for occupiers and delivering the number of jobs that are needed.
- Employment – the aim is to create 1,300 jobs and to recreate the local, stable, high-quality employment that used to be provided by the now-defunct employers in this area. People will be able to walk, cycle or take the bus to work, reducing traffic volumes and reducing commuting hours.
- Business - one of the key factors that businesses consider in deciding whether to locate to a particular area is the proximity to a substantial workforce. With over 30,000 people living within just a few miles of this site, one of the primary attractions will be the local workforce.

- The LDO will provide certainty for businesses. Employees will also want to come because the facilities will be modern and up to date. There is significant evidence that demand for A1 Class accommodation is strong and there is a huge shortage of that in our authority.
- The sort of businesses we want to attract to the site are those vital to the green economy, working in renewables, heat pumps, battery technology, power management systems and carbon reduction.
- Midsomer Norton High Street – To regenerate our high streets we have to somehow stimulate demand for the goods and services provided there and creating 1,300 new jobs will be a good way to do this.
- Transport - It is a commitment of this administration to promote active travel and public transport and reduce car travel. With so many employees living locally and with provision of suitable infrastructure, we expect a real modal shift in transport methods. People will be able to walk to work.
- The enabling works of the scheme that include road improvements, active travel routes and infrastructure development of the entire site will come at a cost of circa £30m and this is being funded by grant funding from various sources.

Cllr Roper thanked officers for their work to enable the local authority to reach this point. It is probably going to take 3 - 4 years to deliver the first jobs on site and 7-10 years to get the site fully occupied. He stated that we need to create the environment to enable reductions in carbon emissions and improve sustainability. There are schoolchildren now who will be of employment age when the jobs are being created. They need something to aspire to, something to look forward to, somewhere to work – jobs like their grandparents had. Our community needs these 1,300 jobs.

Cllr Sarah Warren seconded the motion and made the following points:

- The Council has set out an economic strategy that aims to support real choice in transport, support for greener businesses, as well as training opportunities in green industries for local people.
- The development will give Somer Valley residents the opportunity to reduce their carbon emissions from commuting. We know that the vast majority of Somer Valley residents currently commute out by car, often to Bath and Bristol, and we know that there are likely to be further housing developments coming forward in the valley, but this development will provide for local jobs.
- The LDO structure by which we are now progressing this green business park, along with the intention that the council should act as landowner and developer, mean that we retain control over the types of business who can occupy the site, the standard of energy efficiency to which buildings are constructed, and the biodiversity accommodated on site. The LDO ensures the development will be fully compliant with planning policy.
- As the developer, the council has the power to insist upon greater ambition, and in the coming years, as our green business park takes shape, local residents can hold future B&NES administrations to account for the quality of the environment that is created on site, and the quality of local green jobs that it provides.
- Funding was approved by the West of England Combined Authority last week to progress the active travel route between Farrington Gurney and Old Mills Lane along the north side of the A362. At that point the route will connect with

infrastructure proposed through this scheme to provide a fully off-road route between Farrington Gurney and Midsomer Norton and on to connect with the Norton Radstock Greenway, giving local people a safe route to walk, wheel or cycle to work or school between the conurbations of the valley. We are committed to ensuring this infrastructure is in place before the site is occupied and have a plan to extend the cycle route on to Bristol. We are also committed to providing bus services along the route before occupation.

- We are also committed to ensuring the site is nature positive, not only through on-site measures, but additionally through off-site contributions to further enhance wild nature in Somer Valley.
- We are currently planning 10 acres, about 7 football pitches, of green infrastructure on site, as well as 10,000 trees and creating sustainable drainage ponds on site that will generate new wetland habitats.
- We are also committed to minimising the impact on air quality of the development, with modelling projecting nitrogen dioxide at well below legal limits over all locations in the vicinity.
- We are committed to creating an exemplar, net zero, green business park for new business and employment, that will contribute to the development of a diverse, creative and sustainable local business base. It will provide a location to grow our green economy, seeking to attract established businesses as well as start-ups.
- The energy efficient premises will provide businesses with a renewably powered, net zero home, of which they can feel proud, and from which they can maximise their contribution to tackling our environmental emergencies – and the council is committed to supporting them in this.

Cllr Tim Ball welcomed the proposed noting that it is a bold and ambitious plan to regenerate the Somer Valley area. More housing will be built in the area and so additional jobs will be needed.

Cllr Matt McCabe stated that the proposal offers security for businesses and especially for start-ups. This provides new opportunities for young people in the area so that they will not have to move away to seek employment.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To adopt the eight aims defined within the report that set the Council's commitments for the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone.
- (2) To review progress on the Enterprise Zone regularly and to agree any further interventions required to ensure that these ambitions are being met.

## **57 SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER**

Cllr Paul Roper introduced the report and moved the officer recommendation.

Cllr Paul May seconded the motion and made the following statement:

“The presentation this evening has been inspirational. This is an example of how we can use this opportunity to work with Bath College to create apprenticeships during and after construction and offer job experience options for young people in the area.

This report provides a sensible process to move the scheme forward, bearing in mind that progress has already been protracted. You mentioned about 2007 – talks have been going on since Wansdyke District Council.

Of course, we have listened to the speakers and written submissions, and this is reflected in the previous paper, but because of the site complications we need to have the powers to deliver a vital employment site set amongst the already commercial area that has been built up around the former Great Mills office and sales warehouse.

There has been considerable consultation and changes made to deliver the master plan that moves towards the many concerns expressed.

We have a responsibility to provide local jobs in the area and clearly this will not happen unless we adopt this high intervention approach. I fully support the recommendations.”

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To adopt the Local Development Order for the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) site recommended by the Local Planning Authority, and to meet the aims of policy SSV9.
- (2) To delegate to the Director of Regeneration and Housing and the Director of Sustainable Communities (or [the Monitoring Officer / Executive Member] for payments of over £500,000) in consultation with the S151 Officer, authority to take all necessary steps to acquire by agreement land and/or rights required for the SVEZ Scheme and to negotiate and settle all necessary compensation and professional fees (including interim payments) as agreed with landowners, where compensation is within the SVEZ Scheme budget. This will be subject to full due diligence and financial evaluation to ensure value for money and that commitments are in line with approved scheme budgets.
- (3) To delegate the approval to the Director of Regeneration and Housing and the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the s151 Chief Finance Officer to:
  - Accept the Investment Fund grants from the West of England Combined Authority, subject to WECA approval at Committee.
  - On grant acceptance to move from provisional to approved budget for £9.3m continue with land assembly and infrastructure design.

## **58 SOMER VALLEY ENTERPRISE ZONE IN PRINCIPLE STATUTORY MECHANISMS**

Cllr Paul Roper introduced the report and moved the officer recommendation.

Cllr Matt McCabe seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- (1) To note the ongoing progress which has been made towards the acquisition of land required to develop the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone (SVEZ) Scheme.
- (2) To authorise the carrying out of formal land referencing (including the procurement of a land referencing agent and the issue requisitions for information under the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 and/or any relevant or associated statutes) across the area being considered for the SVEZ Scheme in order to identify landowners, their interests and to gather as much information as possible about the land. This will include full due diligence and financial evaluation to ensure value for money.
- (3) To authorise the entry into negotiations by the Council (and on behalf of the Council) with landowners and others with an interest in the relevant land required for the delivery of the SVEZ Scheme in order to acquire land and rights by agreement where possible.
- (4) To authorise the acquisition of land or rights required for the SVEZ Scheme subject to relevant financial limits, whereby the decision to proceed with any purchase in excess of the SVEZ Scheme budget would be referred to [Cabinet /Single Member Decision] for authorisation.
- (5) To delegate to the Director of Regeneration and Housing and the Director of Sustainable Communities (or [the Monitoring Officer / Executive Member] for payments of over £500,000), in consultation with the S151 Officer, authority to take all necessary steps to acquire by agreement land and/or rights required for the SVEZ Scheme and to negotiate and settle all necessary compensation and professional fees (including interim payments) as agreed with landowners, where compensation is within the SVEZ Scheme budget. This will be subject to full due diligence and financial evaluation to ensure value for money and that commitments are in line with approved scheme budgets.
- (6) To authorise the taking of all steps (including the drafting of a CPO and related documentation) necessary to prepare for a subsequent report to Cabinet to determine the use of compulsory purchase powers to acquire the land and rights in land required for the SVEZ Scheme.

The meeting ended at 8.31 pm

Chair \_\_\_\_\_

Date Confirmed and Signed \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by Democratic Services**