

Strategic Working Group Minutes

Tuesday 11th February 2025

Cllr Rowlands
Cllr Eyre
Cllr Saunders
Cllr Cook – apologies were received

In attendance: Town Clerk

1. Annual Action Plans 2024-2025 and 2025-2026

It was noted that all committee actions, apart from HBCC, had progressed well. It was agreed that the action plan review and forward plan should be put on the agenda of each committee.

RECOMMENDED that each Committee reviews the current Annual Action Plan and comments accordingly and then drafts 2025-2026 Actions having regard to the accompanying budget.

2. SBC Assets SWOT Analysis LGR Version

A discussion took place on the SWOT analysis for increasing income, which was undertaken some time ago, including a debate on income from the Guildhall. Weddings provided the largest portion of income and the Guildhall was generally let to community groups without budgets for room hire. There hadn't been much opportunity to apply for grants this year, as it was very much dependent on the right grant for the right project.

Also discussed was the SWOT analysis for the devolution of assets and services. SBC has made an initial approach regarding a discussion on public conveniences but have not provided any costings. It was felt there should be a basic criterion for the transfer of assets and the following was suggested:

- Service or asset is due to be terminated or disposed of by higher authority
- Public are keen to retain it
- TC has skill set to manage complexity of service or asset
- Service improvements or efficiencies will be achieved by TC management

We are awaiting further correspondence from SBC following our confirmation that we are happy to have a 'discussion' on public conveniences. The Clerk suggested it would be helpful to be given a clear steer on the Council's opinion for taking on devolved assets, or not, particularly as she was participating in month meetings with Swale Officers.

RECOMMENDED that Policy and Resources Committee have a discussion and agree appetite and process for taking on devolved assets and services in the light of local government reorganisation. Note: there is an

opportunity to receive details of Somerset's devolution process from a former officer.

RECOMMENDED that Policy and Resources Committee agree a process for discussions with neighbouring parish councils on the preferred direction of local government reorganisation (ie East/West/Mid)

3. Communication Plan – Residents' Surveys

A draft comms plan was considered. It was felt the town council must be clear in its communication that we have no influence on the process to ensure we are not sullied by the process.

4. Strategic Plan update

It was agreed that in the light of local government reorganisation, it was too early to review the Strategic Plan, but it should take into account the responses from the 2024 Residents' Survey.

RECOMMENDED that the Strategic Plan be reviewed in 3 month's time.

5. Any Other Business

RECOMMENDED that Cllr Claire Martin be invited to join the Strategic Working Group, as Deputy Mayor and as Watling Ward Member – which ensures representation from all wards.

6. Date of Next Meeting

After the next Policy and Resources Committee meeting.