

WEST SOMERSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 20 January 2010 at 6.30 pm
in the Council Chamber, Williton**

Present:

Councillor E May	Chairman
Councillor J A Walker	Vice-Chairman
Councillor H J W Davies	Councillor G S Dowding
Councillor M J Downes	Councillor J Freeman
Councillor N G J Hercock	Councillor J A M Hill
Councillor P E Humber	Councillor K V Kravis
Councillor C M Lawrence	Councillor I R Melhuish
Councillor C Morgan	Councillor N D Parbrook
Councillor S J Pugsley	Councillor D Ross
Councillor D J Sanders	Councillor S J Slade
Councillor T Taylor	Councillor P A Tipney
Councillor K H Turner	Councillor R J Webber
Councillor D J Westcott	Councillor C White

Officers in Attendance:

Executive Director (A Dyer)
Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer (B Lang)
Planning Manager (A Goodchild)
Meeting Administrator (E Day)

C96 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M W J Gammon, A F Knight, B W Leaker, A J Palmer, K J Ross, D R Seale and S A Stokes.

C97 Declarations of Interest

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Member of a County, Parish or Town Council:

Name	Minute No	Description of Interest	Personal or Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr M J Downes	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr C M Lawrence	All Items	Somerset County Council	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr N Hercock	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr J A M Hill	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D Ross	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke

				and voted
Cllr K H Turner	All Items	Brompton Ralph	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr J A Walker	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr R Webber	All items	Cutcombe	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr D J Westcott	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and voted
Cllr C White	All Items	Brompton Regis	Personal	Spoke and voted

In addition Councillor H J W Davies, Item 5 – Consultation Response on Energy National Policy Statements, EDF’s Stage 1 Consultation Report and National Grid’s Hinkley Point C Connection Project – personal interest as he lives and trades in the village of one of the proposed campus sites.

C98 Public Participation

Mr J Holden spoke on Item 5 – Consultation Response on Energy National Policy Statements, EDF’s Stage 1 Consultation Report and National Grid’s Hinkley Point C Connection Project.

Mr Holden advised the Council of the results of a recent postal ballot undertaken in Williton regarding the siting of the proposed 200 bed campus.

C99 Electoral Review of West Somerset

(Report No. WSC 6/10, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to set out the progress made by the Electoral Review Working Group so that the Council could consider making formal submission to the Boundary Committee in respect of the size of the Council and associated Ward pattern.

The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer expressed his thanks to all the members of the Electoral Review Working Group especially the Chair and also to Elisa Day. He explained the process so far and confirmed that all correspondence received as a result of the consultation exercise had been emailed to all Members as it had been received to enable them to take account of the views expressed.

Councillor Freeman proposed that a recorded vote should be made on any vote taken on Item 4, this proposal was seconded by Councillor H J W Davies.

Councillor Humber, Chairman of the Electoral Review Working Group advised the Members that the Working Group had found there were no easy solutions but, if the Council did not submit a proposal to the Boundary Committee then the Boundary Committee would propose their own recommendations with a limited amount of knowledge of the District.

The recommendation in the report, subject to an agreed amendment relating to Minehead, for 28 Members was proposed by Councillor Humber and seconded by Councillor Downes.

Councillor Taylor advised Members that he did not feel that the recommendation from the Working Group was the right one to guide Members. He pointed out that the authority still had to carry out the functions of any other authority even though it was very small and sparse. He also pointed out that not all Councillors attend meetings regularly, over a two year period approximately 20% had not attended, therefore the number of Councillors should have some slack to protect the number of Members on Committees.

Councillor Taylor recommended consideration of his alternative paper containing options for 29, 30 and 31 Members.

The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer reminded Members that the Boundary Committee had advised that the Council can submit no proposals, one proposal or more than one proposal.

The following comments were made regarding the Electoral Review:

- The rural Wards cover a much bigger area and therefore service more Parishes.
- Many rural Parishes cannot get mobile signals or internet and some do not even have electricity, therefore travel is needed to get to all rural areas as it cannot be done using technology.
- Many of the Parish/Town Councils who wrote in had requested the status quo.
- The Cabinet must not consist of less than 7 members, but should be 9 and the Scrutiny Committee should be 9 members.
- Planning Committee should be reduced from the current number of members but not 12 as this is an even number, 13 would be more appropriate.
- Community identity is at its strongest in the rural areas.
- No need for an increase in members for the Williton Ward.
- The current variance was created by the last electoral review, therefore the Council should agree a proposal so the Boundary Committee do not come up with their own ideas which did not work well the last time e.g. Alcombe Ward of Minehead extending to Wellington Square.
- Community identity is important, especially with regard to finding future representatives for the Council.
- Town and Parish Councils have received very little information because of the timing of the review.
- Rural sparsity and urban deprivation balance each other.

NOTE: Councillor D J Sanders left the meeting before the conclusion of the item and before any votes took place.

Councillor Taylor proposed his alternative paper (without the option for 31 Members) as an amendment to the original motion and Cllr Turner seconded this amendment.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment as follows:

Councillor Davies	Against	Councillor Dowding	For
Councillor Downes	Against	Councillor Freeman	Against
Councillor Hercock	For	Councillor Hill	Against
Councillor Humber	Against	Councillor Kravis	Against
Councillor Lawrence	For	Councillor May	Against
Councillor Melhuish	Against	Councillor Morgan	Against
Councillor Parbrook	Against	Councillor Pugsley	For
Councillor D Ross	Against	Councillor Slade	Against
Councillor Taylor	For	Councillor Tipney	For
Councillor Turner	For	Councillor Walker	Against
Councillor Webber	For	Councillor Westcott	For
Councillor White	For		

The amendment was LOST by 13 votes to 10.

A recorded vote was taken on the original motion as follows:

Councillor Davies	For	Councillor Dowding	Against
Councillor Downes	For	Councillor Freeman	For
Councillor Hercock	Against	Councillor Hill	For
Councillor Humber	For	Councillor Kravis	For
Councillor Lawrence	Against	Councillor May	For
Councillor Melhuish	For	Councillor Morgan	For
Councillor Parbrook	For	Councillor Pugsley	Against
Councillor D Ross	For	Councillor Slade	For
Councillor Taylor	Against	Councillor Tipney	Against
Councillor Turner	Against	Councillor Walker	For
Councillor Webber	Against	Councillor Westcott	Against
Councillor White	Against		

The motion was carried by 13 votes to 10.

RESOLVED that the Council endorse a proposal to the Boundary Committee for a Council size of 28 Councillors and associated Ward pattern, attached as **Appendix A** to these minutes.

The Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer advised Members that although this Council would be submitting its own proposal to the Boundary Committee, this did not prevent any Member from putting in his/her own proposal.

C100 Consultation Response on Energy National Policy Statements, EDF's Stage 1 Consultation Report and National Grid's Hinkley Point C Connection Project

(Report No. WSC 7/10, circulated with the Agenda).

The purpose of the report was to seek Members comments on the draft consultation response of West Somerset to the Energy National Policy Statements,

draft consultation response of Sedgemoor District Council and West Somerset on EDF's Stage 1 Consultation Report and draft consultation response of West Somerset on the National Grid's consultation on the Hinkley C Connection Project.

The Planning Manager introduced Mark Smith of Arup who was working with the Council through the Planning Performance Agreement and had assisted in the drafting of the response's, in consultation with West Somerset Council and Sedgemoor District Council.

A presentation was made by the Planning Manager on the Council's response to the National Policy Statements, the EDF Stage 1 Consultation and the National Grid.

During the debate the following points were raised:

- Concerns regarding the overall cost of National Grid lines and concerns regarding other potential connection projects in this area of the country
- Serious concerns were raised regarding some aspects community safety in particular the problems that could be caused by a large influx of well paid, mainly male workers
- No transport case to support the proposals
- Critical that the details of the traffic impacts associated with the different associated development options are presented and supported by robust and comprehensive traffic modelling
- Deep concerns about the lack of work proposed to the roads that already have increased use during the tourism months due to Butlins
- No provision for cycle paths or cycle lanes – these should be considered as they also help to slow traffic
- Significant concern about the scale and potential impacts of EDF's worker accommodation and park and ride facility at Williton.
- No transport justification for the proposals at Williton
- Consideration should be given to other options on brownfield land for associated development
- The results of the postal ballot undertaken in Williton found that site A was a clear favourite out of the two proposed sites but no option was given to enable people to vote for no site.
- The bund should be located as far north as possible to minimise impacts on properties in Shurton
- There needs to be benefit for the local communities
- Improvements to local community facilities should be made, Stogursey are likely to see an increase in children who will need educating - the current school still has old wooden buildings.
- A community benefit package should be developed to offset the consequences of hosting the nuclear project
- Concern regarding the prospect of accommodating a substantial workforce, which is likely to be predominately male, within the District during the construction of the project
- Consideration needs to be given regarding problems that are likely to arise because of accommodating the workforce

- Additional resources will be needed for policing, doctors, ambulances and schools as well as others
- Health Impact Assessment should be addressed as a requirement not a suggestion
- The EDF claim that 50% of the workers will be local seems very optimistic, a more accurate figure is needed, information from other projects could be used
- What influence would EDF have on any sub-contractors?
- Nuclear waste not covered in enough detail
- Grave concern on the impacts of the development on the availability of affordable and private rented accommodation to meet local needs
- Additional demand from the EDF workforce for accommodation within the District may reduce the supply and/or increase the cost of affordable housing
- EDF should maximise the potential for long term legacy benefits from the provision of worker accommodation by being constructed to reflect local housing need.
- No evaluation undertaken of the potential impact of the project on the tourism sector within West Somerset
- A community benefits package for West Somerset is needed – this should include tourism, recreation and leisure projects
- Would a park and ride facility in Williton that is developed on the flood plain remove any flood risks for Williton?
- Would continued opposition to the plan result in a compulsory purchase order? That could then results in a less favourable result to the local population.
- Need to extract as much planning gain from the developers to improve surrounding infrastructure.
- There is another way of looking at the development – there would be an opportunity to be had
- The land identified as affordable housing sites can be used by developers and will not necessarily go to local people, worth remembering that, if EDF use this land it would come back to the Council to enable us to provide affordable housing for local people after the development – it is important not to lose site of this.

RESOLVED (1) that the Council express their serious concern at the lack of detailed information to evidence the options put forward in the consultation document.

RESOLVED (2) that, regardless of Resolution (1) above, the Council do respond and that the response be built upon and reflective of the presentation and the views voiced by all members during the debate.

The meeting closed at 9.14pm.