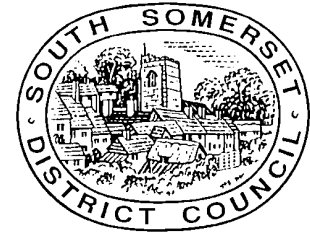


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 31st March 2015

10.00 am

**Main Committee Room
Council Offices
Brympton Way
Yeovil
BA20 2HT**

(disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



Members listed on the following page are requested to attend the meeting.

The public and press are welcome to attend.

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please ring the Agenda Co-ordinator, **Becky Sanders, Democratic Services Officer 01935 462596**, website: www.southsomerset.gov.uk

This Agenda was issued on Thursday 19 March 2015.

Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)

This information is also available on our website
www.southsomerset.gov.uk



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Scrutiny Committee Membership

The following members are requested to attend the meeting:

Chairman: Sue Steele
Vice-chairmen: Dave Bulmer and Nigel Mermagen

Pauline Clarke
Nick Colbert
Carol Goodall
Tim Inglefield

Pauline Lock
Tony Lock
Paul Maxwell
Graham Middleton

Sue Osborne
David Recardo
Martin Wale

Information for the Public

What is Scrutiny?

The Local Government Act 2000 requires all councils in England and Wales to introduce new political structures which provide a clear role for the Council, the Executive and non-executive councillors.

One of the key roles for non-executive councillors is to undertake an overview and scrutiny role for the council. In this Council the overview and scrutiny role involves reviewing and developing, scrutinising organisations external to the council and holding the executive to account

Scrutiny also has an important role to play in organisational performance management.

The Scrutiny Committee is made up of 14 non-executive members and meets monthly to consider items where executive decisions need to be reviewed before or after their implementation, and to commission reviews of policy or other public interest.

Members of the public are able to:

- attend meetings of the Scrutiny Committee except where, for example, personal or confidential matters are being discussed;
- speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings; and
- see agenda reports.

Meetings of the Scrutiny Committee are held monthly on the Tuesday prior to meetings of the District Executive at 10.00am in the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

Agendas and minutes of these meetings are published on the Council's website www.southsomerset.gov.uk.

The Council's Constitution is also on the website and available for inspection in council offices.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the agenda co-ordinator named on the front page.

South Somerset District Council – Council Plan

Our focuses are: (all equal)

- Jobs – We want a strong economy which has low unemployment and thriving businesses
- Environment – We want an attractive environment to live in with increased recycling and lower energy use
- Homes – We want decent housing for our residents that matches their income
- Health and Communities – We want communities that are healthy, self-reliant and have individuals who are willing to help each other

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Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 31 March 2015

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 5)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 March 2015.

2. Apologies for absence

3. Declarations of Interest

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (adopted July 2012), which includes all the provisions relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI), personal and prejudicial interests, Members are asked to declare any DPI and also any personal interests (and whether or not such personal interests are also "prejudicial") in relation to any matter on the Agenda for this meeting. A DPI is defined in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012 No. 1464) and Appendix 3 of the Council's Code of Conduct. A personal interest is defined in paragraph 2.8 of the Code and a prejudicial interest is defined in paragraph 2.9. In the interests of complete transparency, Members of the County Council, who are not also members of this committee, are encouraged to declare any interests they may have in any matters being discussed even though they may not be under any obligation to do so under any relevant code of conduct.

4. Public question time

5. Issues arising from previous meetings

This is an opportunity for Members to question the progress on issues arising from previous meetings. However, this does not allow for the re-opening of a debate on any item not forming part of this agenda.

6. Chairman's Announcements

Items for Discussion

7. Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre (Pages 6 - 15)

8. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 March 2015
(Page 16)

9. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 April 2015 (Page 17)

10. Scrutiny Committee End of Term Report (Pages 18 - 24)

11. **Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel** (Pages 25 - 33)
12. **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews** (Page 34)
13. **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Page 35)
14. **Date of next meeting** (Page 36)

Agenda Item 1

South Somerset District Council

Draft Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT** on **Tuesday 3 March 2015**.

(10.00 am - 12.55 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Dave Bulmer | Pauline Lock |
| Nigel Mermagen | Graham Middleton |
| Pauline Clarke | Sue Osborne |
| Nick Colbert | David Recardo |
| Carol Goodall | Martin Wales |

Also Present:

Ric Pallister

Officers

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Pam Harvey | Civil Contingencies Manager |
| Rina Singh | Strategic Director (Place & Performance) |
| Martin Woods | Assistant Director (Economy) |
| Donna Parham | Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services) |
| Laurence Willis | Assistant Director (Environment) |
| Paul Wheatley | Principal Spatial Planner |
| Emily McGuinness | Scrutiny Manager |

118. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

119. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Inglefield and Tony Lock.

120. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

121. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

122. Issues arising from previous meetings (Agenda Item 5)

There were no issues raised.

123. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that she had attended the recent meeting of the Somerset Waste Board. She also encouraged members to complete the Scrutiny Feedback Questionnaire which was circulated following last month's Scrutiny Committee meeting. Information provided would form part of an 'end of term' report to be submitted to next month's meeting.

124. Civil Contingencies Presentation (Agenda Item 7)

The Civil Contingencies Manager attended the meeting at the request of members, to provide a debrief following an incident last year when several undocumented migrants were found by police within the district.

Following the presentation, members made the following points:

- Members thanked officers for their excellent work during this incident
- Members raised concerns that it seemed inappropriate for district council employees to be responsible for people who were under arrest – should this not be the responsibility of the police?
- The complexity of delivering multi-agency civil contingency arrangements was noted.

In conclusion, members noted the continued good work of the Civil Contingencies Manager and asked that representations be made to the relevant bodies, including central government, asking for better arrangements for dealing more effectively with any undocumented migrants in the future.

125. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 February 2015 (Agenda Item 8)

The Chairman noted that the Scrutiny comments had been considered and were included in the District Executive minutes which had been circulated.

126. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 March 2015 (Agenda Item 9)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 5 March 2015. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration.

Quarterly Performance and Complaints Monitoring Report – 3rd Quarter 2014/15 (item 6)

- Members were pleased to note that whilst PI003 is still showing as an exception, performance is improving. Scrutiny members suggest that it would be helpful if the numbers as well as percentages were reported to provide greater context.
- Members also suggest that it would be beneficial if future monitoring reports could include data on the number of planning applications determined within time frames and those which are not. Whilst this is no longer a statutory indicator, it would be a useful indicator of overall performance for members. The Strategic Director has informed members that this information can be made easily available.

Adoption of the South Somerset Local Plan (item 7)

- Members considered the process undertaken to get to this point and noted the significant implications of not adopting the Plan. Scrutiny comments related to the process undertaken to develop the Plan with members noting that Full Council would be an opportunity for wider debate.
- Members were grateful to Principal Spatial Planner for clarifying that planning policies HG3 and HG4 were more likely than SS2 to be impacted by recent government announcement on the levels at which affordable housing contributions are triggered. Scrutiny sought clarification on how the plan will react to any national policy changes and the results of legal challenges being mounted by other local authorities?
- Clarification was also sought on the potential for developers to notice that during the life of the plan, the 5 year housing supply could become outdated and were informed that fluctuations will happen and that an effective monitoring process should help manage this situation.

District Wide Voluntary Sector Grants (items 8 to 13)

- Members sought clarification that the unallocated monies within the Health and Wellbeing fund would be held in reserve for future similar bids and not removed from the budget or used in other areas.
- Members were pleased note the positive financial position of the SSVCA but requested that more detailed financial information, similar to that which has been provided in the past, is made available to keep members fully up to date.
- A question was asked about the issue of duplication – SSDC are funding very similar organisations, as well as providing Welfare advice ourselves and Scrutiny seek assurance that every effort is made to avoid duplication.

Access from Memorial Hall Car park to land at the rear of the Dolphin Hotel, Wincanton (item 14)

- Members asked for clarification on the map – the arrow appears to show the entrance being on the Quaker Meeting House land rather than the Dolphin hotel?

Establishment of the Somerset Growth Board (item 15)

- Whilst members were supportive of the principle of ensuring the Somerset case is well made to the LEP, there were some concerns expressed as to how the Growth

Board would fit in with the current LEP structures and how what steps would be taken to ensure the proposed board remained outcome focused and did not become a 'talking shop'.

- There was some discussion about seeking to ensure formal representation of the Growth Board on the LEP and Leader agreed to take this point forward with the other Somerset leaders and Chief Executives.
- Scrutiny members requested that a further report is brought forward in 12 months to monitor progress.

Retail Relief from Business Rates (item 16)

- Scrutiny suggest that the recommendations make it more explicit that a further report on the policy relating to business rate relief for childcare provider will be brought forward as part of the budget setting process next year.

Loan to Somerset Waste Partnership for Waste Vehicles (item17)

- Members supported the recommendations.

Huish Academy Artificial Grass Pitch Project (item 18)

- Members noted that this has been extensively discussed at Area North Committee. They sought reassurance that the school are aware of risks associated with the funds identified via s106 trigger clauses not being reached.

Community Right to Bid - Assets of Community Value (item 19)

- Scrutiny sought clarification as to what would happen in a building was in the hands of receivers at the time of sale and were informed that the building would be except from the Community Right to Buy process for the first sale.

Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Partnership Update (item 20)

- Scrutiny members were pleased to note that the majority of funds allocated in Somerset had been allocated to South Somerset and felt that this reflected the efforts of the officers and members involved.
- Members asked what would happen in April at the end of the initial period and what would happen to any remaining funds unallocated at that time?

Disposal of the workshop in Helliars Road, Chard (Confidential) (item 25)

- Members supported the recommendations.

127. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 10)

The Scrutiny Manager noted that the Council Tax Reduction Group had met for a second time and that work was progressing well.

128. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Manager informed members that she had attended the inaugural meeting of the Somerset Rivers Authority. It was noted that Scrutiny should keep a watching brief to ensure the positive momentum achieved to date was maintained.

129. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 12)

The Scrutiny Manager noted that an 'End of Term' report would be submitted to the next Scrutiny Committee meeting, being the last meeting prior to the elections. The report would look to show the key achievements of the Scrutiny Committee over the past 4 years as well as reflect on the challenges and opportunities for the future.

130. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 13)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 31st March at 10.00 a.m. in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

.....
Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre

Executive Portfolio Holder: Sylvia Seal, Portfolio Holder Health and Well Being
Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations & Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Steve Joel, Health and Well Being
Service Manager: Katy Menday, Countryside Manager
Lead Officer: Steve Joel and Katy Menday as above
Contact Details: steve.joel@southsomerset.gov.uk 01935 462278

Purpose of the Report

This report highlights the key elements of the project to deliver the multi-purpose café, education and information centre at Ninesprings, Yeovil. It seeks to provide an opportunity for members to review the approach and identify areas of practice to be considered for future projects.

Forward Plan

This report has been part of the forward plan.

Public Interest

The Council initiated a project in 2009 to establish a multi-purpose centre to support the extensive use of the Council's 127 acre Green Flag award winning Yeovil Country Park on the southern and eastern edges of Yeovil.

The new Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre comprising a café, public toilets, a meeting point and information point, volunteer space, and a small staff area and workshop opened in October 2014. The Centre has been funded through a package of grants and SSDC capital finance.

In delivering capital projects of this nature it is important to take the opportunity to review and learn from the approaches deployed in their execution. This report provides an opportunity for members of the Scrutiny Committee to do this.

Actions Required

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report and highlight areas of practice to be considered as part of future projects.

Background

The Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre project was initiated in 2009 to address concerns arising from user consultation exercises highlighting the lack of facilities available for visitors, staff and volunteers at Yeovil Country Park. This report highlights the key elements of the project.

Summary of Project Stages

The overall delivery of this project has consisted of nine key stages:

- Stage 1 – Project Initiation
- Stage 2 – Feasibility
- Stage 3 – Yeovil Vision Capital Bid
- Stage 4 – Planning Permission
- Stage 5 – Capital Fund Raising
- Stage 6 – Value Engineering / Design Refinement
- Stage 7 – Contractor Procurement
- Stage 8 – Contract and Construction
- Stage 9 – Operation Preparation
- Stage 10 – Handover and Operation

This phased approach to delivery enables the Council to proactively manage project risk.

Stage 1 - Project Initiation

This project was initiated in 2009 to create a new Visitor Centre and Ranger Base at Yeovil Country Park and establish a 'Countryside Ranger' position to implement a full programme of activities for visitors of the park.

At the time it was seeking to address concerns emerging from user consultation exercises highlighting the lack of facilities available for visitors, staff and volunteers at Yeovil Country Park. These exercises were led by the ranger team and conducted on a face to face basis in Yeovil Town Centre and Yeovil Country Park events between 2005 and 2009. It is important to highlight that the call for improved facilities escalated significantly after the development of the new Visitor and Education Centre at the Ham Hill Country Park in 2006.

Using the findings emerging from the consultation exercises the ranger team identified that a multi-purpose centre for Yeovil Country Park would need to contain:

- Public WC facilities.
- Meeting Room and entrance way, primarily intended as educational facilities and for use during public events held at the Country Park.
- Workshop and building service areas.
- Tea room and refreshment serving area, kitchen area and external over-spill area to serve the public.
- Rangers office, small kitchen area and washing facilities.
- External pathways and access points.

At the same time they set out six main project objectives:

1. The development of new facilities (Ranger Base and Visitor Centre) at Yeovil Country Park.
2. Appointing a Grant-funded Community Officer for a fixed term period of 4 years.
3. Creating additional visitors (schools, students, informal education and events) to the park.
4. Increasing the number of volunteering opportunities at the park.
5. Increasing formal training opportunities.
6. Generating a small but dependable income stream.

Stage 2 - Feasibility and Stage 3 – Yeovil Vision Capital Bid

A feasibility study was undertaken by the Countryside Service and the Yeovil Vision Management Team in 2009.

SSDC Architect Nicola Drew worked in conjunction with the Countryside Rangers and other SSDC Officers to design the detailed scheme. As part of this process advice was also sought from other countryside professionals at local sites including the National Trust, RSPB and Jurassic Coast, plus from our Lottery advisor.

After consideration of all potential site options, the building was purpose designed for its setting and sought to incorporate a number of sustainable technologies including an air source heat pump, under floor heating, FSC approved timber, energy and water saving technology, high level wall insulation, triple glazing, low lighting and PIR sensors, foundations made from recycled crushed concrete and walls made of recycled hemp block construction.

After completion of the design process, capital cost and revenue estimates were prepared, with the feasibility study identifying two elements – the first a capital project of £353K for the centre with on-going annual premises costs amounting to £14,000, and the second a revenue project of £201K to appoint a Countryside Ranger for four years.

Importantly, the framing of the feasibility study was influenced strongly from early conversations and indications of support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). As a result the feasibility study anticipated that a HLF lottery grant of £483,600 would be secured to enable both elements of the project to be delivered.

The design and feasibility study was considered and approved by the Yeovil Vision Project Board in 2009 and the SSDC District Executive in early 2010.

Stage 4 – Planning Permission

The Planning Application submission was prepared in house by Engineering and Property Services having sought pre-advice from the Development Control Service. As an internal application it was considered by the Area South Committee and the Regulation Committee. Planning consent was granted in 2010 and subsequently renewed in July 2013.

Whilst the application received a small number of objections from adjoining neighbours in 2010, the application received significant support from the Friends of Yeovil Country Park, volunteers and users of the park.

Building this support is essential to these types of projects, and in this case the time spent by the ranger team in consulting, updating and involving users in the project was central to making an effective and reasoned case at both Committees, and planning consent being granted in 2010.

Stage 5 – Capital Fund Raising

Arguably the biggest setback in realizing this project arose in late 2010 as the HLF announced changes to their grant funding programmes, setting out that they would no longer be supporting capital applications to support the development of visitor centres. Their focus would shift towards revenue applications to support the development and management of existing greenspaces, and projects seeking to deliver a wide range of activities designed to improve access in ways which are complimentary to those greenspaces. In our case, this meant the Council could now only submit a revenue based application for the second element of the project.

In moving forward the ranger team formed the Friends of Yeovil Country Park community group to assist in fundraising for the centre and other country park projects.

The group conducted a desktop exercise identifying alternative prospective grants, national and local business funds. With a core of 10 members, the group met approximately every month and throughout 2012 and 2013 approached / submitted funding applications to 113 national and local businesses and grant funding bodies in fundraising for the Centre. Ultimately it was this collaboration that secured the finance for the centre.

As part of the desktop exercise, landfill tax grants schemes were identified as a key funding opportunity. In a project of this scale, it is vital to secure at least one major grant offer to enable the project to be realized and in particular to give confidence to smaller grant funders that the project is deliverable. Having researched the potential landfill options, the group made an initial inquiry to the Veolia Environmental Trust in Dec 2012 which successfully past round 1 in May 2013, resulting in the Council being invited to prepare a detailed submission and presentation to the South West Board in August 2013. Following South West Board approval, the Council was offered an in-principle grant of £90,000 towards the project, subject to the Council securing the remaining capital funding required for the build by the 20th January 2014.

The Countryside Service submitted a variety of bids, the successful ones are listed in the table below:

| Funder | Amount confirmed |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| SSDC via Yeovil Vision | £50,000 |
| Agusta Westland | £5,000 |
| Yeovil Town Council | £5,000 |
| The Veolia Environmental Trust | £90,000 |
| Unilateral Agreement | £39,229 |
| Friends of Yeovil Country Park | £4,000 |
| J H Meech and Son | £25 |
| Old Mill Accountancy | £250 |
| Abbey Manor Charitable Trust | £500 |
| Countryside Staff Member Sponsorship | £236 |
| Waitrose Community Fund | £102 |
| Individual public donations | £510 |
| Clarks Trust | £10,000 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Wessex Watermark Award | £1,500 |
| EDF Green Energies | £8,245 |
| Well Being of Yeovil Association | £8,000 |
| SSDC Countryside | £3,000 |
| SSDC District Executive Underwrite | £75,000 |
| TOTAL CONFIRMED | £300,597 |

In terms of the overall capital funding raised for the project, the percentage of external funds raised amounted to 57% (£172,597), with the remaining 43% (£128,000) of funding provided by the Council.

The key to successfully raising the £172,597 of external finance for the building is down to its manageable scale, multi-purpose use, focus on volunteers and supporting their roles in the wider country park and provision of basic facilities for the public to enhance their country park visit. The support and dedicated work of the Friends of Yeovil Country Park throughout this whole process has ensured the success of this project; from their support at planning committees, to pitches and approaches to local funders, and their overall drive to see the project come to fruition.

Many approaches were unsuccessful including bids made to Tesco, Screwfix Foundation, Yarlinton Homes, The NatureSave Trust, Battens, The Big Lottery Fund and Biffa Awards. Despite this a number of positive community links were created with local businesses, for example, Crofton Stores now twice a year supply 800 chocolate bars for children's events in the park, Asda's Community Champion attends and assists at events, and various other companies have committed vouchers and prizes for raffles and events. More recently the Friends of Yeovil Country Park secured a further £25,000 in grant money (from the Ernest Cook Trust, Grants for the Arts and Awards for All) to enable the delivery of a range of events from the new Centre over the next 3 years.

Stage 6 - Value Engineering / Design Refinement

Following receipt of the Veolia Environmental Trust grant offer, the project team re-assessed and reduced the capital budget for the project down from the original estimated £353,000 to £290,000 excluding VAT.

In order to achieve this, the project team reviewed the design and undertook a value engineering exercise together with an external Quantity Surveyor and the Development Control to bring the project within budget.

From a design perspective the key change concerned the re-working of the internal spaces to incorporate the café facility to provide a meeting point and generate future income streams for the park, removing the outdated tea room and building upon the learning from the Ham Hill Centre.

Some examples of changes made through this process included the foundation design being altered based on detailed Geo-Technical Soil and Ground Investigation assessments. Mechanical and electrical provisions were specified through further detailed design. Walls were changed to standard cavity concrete block with full fill insulation. Minor adjustments were made to window locations and triple glazing proposals were dropped. Eight sunpipes were installed to increase natural daylight in the building and therefore reduce requirement for artificial lighting.

Stage 7 – Contractor Procurement

The procurement strategy comprised of appointing a principal contractor to deliver the building, and a separate specialist contractor to fit out the café.

The preparation of the tender documentation and management of the tender process was undertaken in-house by the Engineering and Property Service.

The principal contractor tendering process was conducted throughout December 2013. Five contractors returned tenders by on Tuesday 7th January 2014.

Following an analysis of the tenders and tenderers, the preferred contractor submission from Melhuish and Saunders amounted to £300,000, after consideration of identified reductions amounting to £57,000. The sum included a £10,000 provision for contingency. This represented the lowest cost submission after removal / re-specification of a small number of items designed to achieve better value.

Stage 8 – Contract and Construction

Ahead of executing the contract the project team worked with each grant provider to discharge the associated terms and conditions in order to enable the Council to commence works.

As part of this process, an issue arose with Veolia in that whilst the Council had secured the remaining capital funding required, Veolia were concerned that the Council had not been able to agree the contract reductions with the preferred tenderer by the 20th January deadline. As the reductions totalled £57,000, Veolia sought an additional assurance that the Council would agree to finance this sum in the event that Melhuish and Saunders would not reduce the contract price. Timescales dictated that an urgent executive decision be taken. It was a relatively low risk as Officers would not have proceeded with the contract unless the contract reductions were agreed.

Contract reductions were subsequently agreed in April 2014, enabling contracts to be finalised and construction to commence on site in May 2014.

Building work ran to schedule and reached practical completion on by Friday 24th October.

The provisional final figure submitted by principal contractor Melhuish and Saunders currently amounts to £280,876. This takes into account issues raised during the snagging period October 2014 – March 2015 and is expected to be finalised and closed shortly.

Based on this provisional final figure of £280,876 the actual spend against the two underwrite provisions provided by the District Executive can be summarised for the avoidance of doubt as follows:

| Underwrite Provision | Anticipated Spend |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| January 2014 – Up to £75,000 | £55,279 |
| February 2014 - £57,000 | £0 |

Subject to final financial contract closure, this means that 61% (£172,597) was raised externally and 39% (£108,279) of funding was provided by the Council.

Stage 9 – Operational Preparation

In order to optimize the café potential for the centre, the project team benefited substantially through an existing contact from the Family Focus Programme who had previously been the Business Development Director for Costa Coffee. This input enabled the project to adopt a national chain commercial approach and 'piggy back' upon a range of national supplier arrangements to both deliver better value for money and fast track implementation.

The range of preparatory activity covered during the 5 month period ahead of the planned opening date comprised:

- Café operating option appraisal
- Market analysis
- Product plan, pricing and profit margins
- Trade projections
- Business planning
- Café layout and equipment specification
- Café fit out procurement
- BT Openreach Communication line provision
- Staff resourcing and recruitment strategy
- Café Manager recruitment
- Coffee tasting, sourcing and supply contract
- Branding
- Crockery and small ware sourcing
- Supplier sourcing
- Tills and Streamline provision
- Assistant Café Manager and Barista recruitment
- Operational risk assessments
- Operational standards
- Till installation and configuration
- Staff training
- Food hygiene rating scheme preparation
- Wifi
- Opening

Operationally one of the critical success factors concerned the appointment of the Manager to the lead the Café. The project team was particularly pleased to attract Samantha Lane with extensive national coffee chain management experience to the role. Samantha has made an outstanding contribution to the Ninesprings operation since she began her employment with the Council in September 2014.

Stage 10 – Handover and Operation

Practical completion was reached as planned on 24th October 2014. Over the weekend of 25th and 26th October the rangers and new café team moved into the Centre, with the building and cafe formally opening on Tuesday 28th October, half term week. The Ranger team organised a celebratory Halloween event on the Friday 31st October to coincide with the Centre opening.

Operationally the centre has created employment equivalent to 4.5 full time staff.

The Café has been developed to be an open and bright space. It welcomes children, provides free wildlife themed activities and crucially for its location it welcomes well behaved dogs. There is space for pushchairs and wheelchairs to move around freely, and there has been a steady increase in the use by groups like child-minders. The recent arrival of WiFi has improved the business use for small meetings and people working remotely.

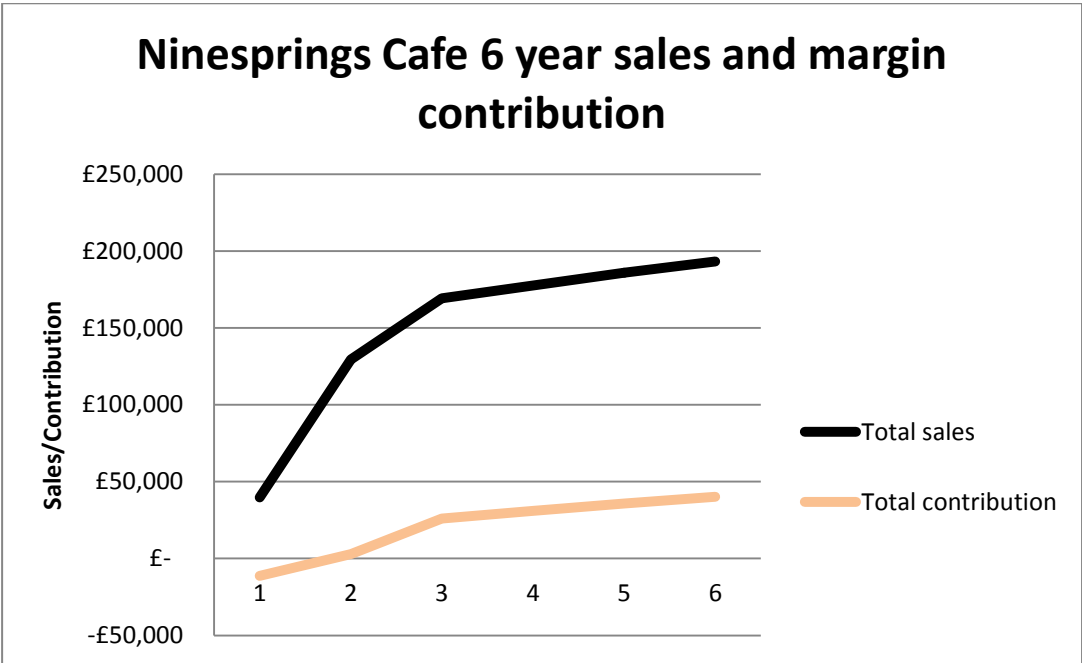
Within two weeks of opening the Café received its five star food hygiene rating.

The café team has just started a feedback exercise, as the business enters its fifth month of trading, to ask for comments on all aspects of the Café. There is also a very active Facebook page for the café (“Ninesprings Café”) where all offers and activities are posted.

The countryside ranger team and volunteers are very happily sharing the building with our new café team and are actively searching out ways to increase footfall to support its success. The most recent success was the free dog micro chipping events delivered by the Dog’s Trust.

The Café is currently outperforming its business plan. To date turnover is nearly double that anticipated through the business plan. For example February 2015 was profiled at £7,688 and takings were £14,611. The Café Manager and Countryside Manager are working together to continue the café success and countryside events and activities are carefully profiled to work alongside the café.

The forward sales and margin projections for the café are summarised in the chart below.



As we enter the Spring the ranger team will be finalising the landscaping outside the center and creating a new outside seating area and bike locking facilities will be added to the area immediately around the building.

Heritage Lottery Fund Submission

The Countryside Service has been working to submit a bid to the HLF to help in the development and management of the wider greenspace of the country park. Initially it was hoped that they would help towards the cost of the construction of the new Centre, however the projects development led us to submit a £440,000 bid to the lottery in mid February 2015 that aims to deliver a wide range of activities complimentary to the new Centre. One of the Lottery's conditions of our round 2 submission was completion of the new Centre.

After a round 1 submission at the end of 2013 a development grant of £35,000 was approved and from May 2014 – January 2015 a project officer was employed. The post researched and consulted upon a range of activities that have been proposed to the lottery as part of our round 2 submission. Throughout the posts duration public responses totalled 1500 and included schools, groups, representatives and individuals.

The Lottery project proposes:

- Employment of 3 year community ranger to coordinate activities and deliver new work programmes.
- Enhanced volunteering opportunities for a greater diversity of individuals and groups.
- New and better interpretation, and educational, materials both inside and outside the Centre and across the Country Park.
- Built repairs to Ninesprings, where the ageing infrastructure in the waterfalls and grottos needs specialist attention.
- Habitat improvement and enhancement works across the park for meadows, wetlands and woodlands.
- A huge variety of events based in the country park but of interest to a great array of people including art sessions, adventurous activities and performances.

The outcome of this submission will be learnt in June.

Corporate Implications

Corporate Priorities

The Ninesprings Café, Education and Information Centre helps contribute towards two SSDC Corporate Priorities:

- a. Focus Two - Environment: Maintain our Country Parks
- b. Focus Four - Health and Communities: Maintain and enhance the South Somerset network of leisure and cultural facilities.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change

Throughout the development of the project full consideration was given to the environmental credentials of the building, ensuring it demonstrated good practice as the building sits within a high quality green space. The building has been constructed of masonry blockwork with minimum recycled content of 50%. The heating is provided (very effectively) via an air source heat pump conducted via under floor heating. Water and energy saving technology have been installed throughout the building in staff, volunteer and public facilities; grant funding has been specifically sought for rain water harvesting to service the public conveniences and sun pipes have been included to reduce energy consumption. The building is largely timber

clad to ensure it fits with the surrounding environment and the timber is all FSC certified in line with the SSDC Timber Policy. The successful building contractor has been obliged to adhere to SSDC Policies concerning responsible and sustainable sourcing of all construction materials. The building has been sited immediately adjacent to an existing car park so the additional area of hard landscaping is minimal. Any extra surfacing is used by pedestrians only, and is of cobbled style sett paving construction. By limiting hard landscaping we have ensured extra surface water run-off is kept to a minimum. A native planting scheme is taking shape around the buildings perimeter, plants have been donated by Homebase and are good for insects, specifically butterflies and bees and also appropriate for the Country Park and its wildlife. Native wildflower meadow mix is to be sown on the remaining disturbed soil and banks around the centre.

Equality and Diversity Implications

This proposed building comes out of many years of research into use of the Country Park and input from groups and individuals who are currently excluded from use of the green space due to a lack of basic facilities. Already we are seeing a wider range of groups accessing and using the Country Park as they have a free to enter, safe and warm base with access to toilets and a café to support their visit. There is some visitor information already provided at the centre and Café staff are able to assist anyone with particular access requirements. Disability awareness training for all café staff will be delivered over the coming months. It is hoped that in 2016 all the visitor information will be vastly improved with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Volunteering has now been expanded to include a Monday afternoon session for those that are less fit or cannot manage an entire day. This is proving successful and further opportunities can be developed from here for more marginalised or minority groups like the Polish community. Lufton College have assisted in fundraising for this project as they foresee greater opportunities for their students in practical volunteering and assisting in opening of the visitor space at the new building. It is likely that new sessions will include women only sessions, training for young people in outdoor skills and volunteering for those with a range of disabilities. With the provision of a building the ranger team will also be able to manage the loan of a new disabled tramper vehicle as part of the Heritage Lottery project to help individuals explore Ninesprings and the wider Country Park. A hearing loop is due to be installed on the Café bar and the Café Manager continues to work with the South Somerset Disability Forum to resolve snagging issues with the building.

Background Information

Background Papers: District Executive – 9th January 2014
Yeovil Country Park Education Centre and Ranger Base Project

Agenda Item 8

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 March 2015

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 5 March 2015.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 5 March 2015 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 9

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 April 2015

Lead Officer: Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462566

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 2 April 2015.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 31 March 2015.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 2 April 2015.

Agenda Item 10

Scrutiny Committee End of Term Report

Lead Officer: Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager
Contact Details: emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566

Purpose of the Report

This report looks to review the work of the Scrutiny function at South Somerset District Council over the past four years and look at the challenges ahead in the light of recent events relating to a lack of effective Scrutiny in public sector agencies such as the Rotherham Child exploitation scandal and the failings at Mid Staffordshire PCT.

Action required

That members of the Scrutiny Committee consider and comment on the report.

The past four years of Scrutiny at SSSDC

List of Scrutiny Reviews

Below is a list of some of the in-depth Task and Finish Reviews that have been carried out by Scrutiny members over the past four years:

- **Choice Based Lettings – HomeFinder Somerset**
This was a very lengthy and detailed review which worked across the County to review the Choice Based Letting arrangements – members sought to make recommendations that would achieve a high performing Choice Based Lettings system that was easily accessible, understandable and fair. To deliver a service that is best in its class and serves the needs of the community. The review focused on the customer experience/perspective.
- **Council Tax Reduction Strategy - Award Winning**
Thorough review of a proposed change in legislation how to deliver changes in South Somerset – this review won a National Good Scrutiny Award and all of the recommendations were adopted by the Executive and Full Council.
- **Economic Development Strategy**
Whilst not the subject of a formal Task and Finish Review, Scrutiny did make a number of recommendations on the style and content of the document which were agreed by the Executive.
- **Budget**
Scrutiny played an active role in both budget setting and budget monitoring. As part of the annual budget setting process Scrutiny have previously been involved in the assessing and commenting on the unavoidable budget pressures identified by officers – this robust scrutiny process has contributed to a significant reduction on the number of such bids submitted. As part of the 2015/16 budget setting process, a Task and Finish Group spent time understanding in some detail the risks and rewards involved in budget setting and the level of skilled judgement required from Finance officers. In addition, Scrutiny regularly receive budget monitoring reports throughout the year.

- **Performance Management**
Following the announcement that the inspection regime overseen by the Audit Commission was to cease, Scrutiny members made a series of recommendations to the Executive on which indicators should be retained to reflect local needs and priorities. They were part of the process in designing how performance information is presented and reported.
- **Employment Support Assessment**
This review was conducted on behalf of the Portfolio Holder who was concerned that a change in government policy was adversely affecting some residents. Evidence was gathered from a number of internal and external sources and several case studies were constructed to show the impact of the change in policy – this information was presented to the Portfolio Holder who was able to use to support his case with government ministers.
- **Cultural Strategy**
A Task and Finish Group was established to review a revised Cultural Strategy produced by Somerset County Council. The group considered best practice models and made a series of recommendations on both the style and content of the Strategy.
- **Equalities Strategy**
This was a good example of where early engagement of members through the Scrutiny process can lead to a positive outcome for the council as a whole. Scrutiny members were involved from the outset in the development of this important corporate strategy and the Executive and subsequently Council, were able to agree the document, confident that it had been robustly scrutinised.
- **Access to Maternity Services by the Gypsy and Traveller Community**
South Somerset District Council was the only district council to be selected to undertake a review as part of a national scheme looking at effective scrutiny of health. This review was supported by a consultant, funded by the Department for Health and the outcomes were fed into a national programme. This review helped to demonstrate that Health Scrutiny is an area for improvement in the future, especially as Somerset County Council has some of the most limited Health Scrutiny arrangements in the country.
- **Flooding**
Following two successive years of extreme flooding, South Somerset District Council led a countywide review of the issues relating to both the cause and effect of flooding. A Flooding Summit was arranged and attended by over 100 local and regional delegates who listened to a series of national experts and participated in solution focused workshops. A Flooding Action Plan was subsequently produced and adopted by all 6 Somerset Authorities and was a source document for the Somerset Levels and Moors Flooding Action Plan. This Review won a national award for joint scrutiny.
- **Partnership review**
This was a very in-depth and lengthy review looking at the whole range of 'partnerships' that the authority was involved with. The Task and Finish group researched a recommended SSDC definition of a partnership and devised a checklist for what an effective partnership was. Each of the partnerships was then assessed against this criteria and recommendations were made to the Executive about SSDC's continued involvement. Subsequent to this review, members looked at the issue of

Outside Bodies and made a subsequent set of recommendations relating to effective member representations on such bodies.

- **Social Housing Fraud**

Members considered the issue of social housing fraud and the role the district council could and should play in reducing it. The Task and Finish group worked with national bodies as well as local social housing providers and identified several areas, particularly relating to data sharing that could be improved. Recommendations were made and endorsed by the Executive and Council as well as by registered social landlords.

- **Non Domestic Rates – Discretionary Relief**

This Task and Finish Group sought to ensure that any revised policy in this area met with the needs of the Council Plan and supported the essential and widely varied voluntary and non-profit making organisations within South Somerset. However, members also had to recognise that a proportion of the assistance given to such organisations through Discretionary Rate Relief is paid by the local taxpayer and as such the Council has a duty to ensure public funds are spent wisely and that there is transparency and accountability in the decisions made.

The Task and Finish group succeeded in making a number of recommendations on key policy principles and proposals to be included within the revised policy taking into account the impact and risks of doing so.

In addition to this, the Scrutiny Committee has also requested reports and/or presentations on a number of topics to allow members to develop a broader understanding of the wide range of services provided by the authority. Examples of such reports requested in the past such reports are:

- The Local Strategic Partnership
- Review of key corporate projects such as the design and build of the Ranger's Centre
- More detail behind performance information – for example, employee sickness absence figures and % of Planning appeals overturned etc

Until this year, Scrutiny has had a programme of presentations from all Portfolio Holders – giving an opportunity for more detailed discussions with Executive members about their service priorities etc. This proved a useful way of helping to familiarise non-executive members with the wide ranging Portfolios.

A further key role of Scrutiny as defined by the Centre for Public Scrutiny in their founding four principles of effective Scrutiny is to hold the Executive to account. At South Somerset this is very effectively achieved by holding the Scrutiny Committee meeting two days prior to the Executive. Consideration of the Executive reports forms a standing item on every Scrutiny Agenda and as such both senior officers and members attend to answer any questions raised by Scrutiny members. All Scrutiny comments are noted and reported during the Executive meeting. This arrangement has become so accepted that the Leader will almost always ask for Scrutiny comments prior to opening an item for wider debate.

As a result of this approach, Scrutiny have been able to identify issues in advance of Executive members being asked to make decisions, and officers have been able to provide the decision makers with the necessary additional information, thus undoubtedly improving the decision making process.

Feedback

As mentioned above, the Scrutiny function at South Somerset has been recognised externally through three Centre for Public Scrutiny Good Scrutiny Awards, and whilst these accolades are always welcome, satisfaction amongst those who engage with the Scrutiny function on a more regular basis is arguably more important.

Over the past four months, all those attending Scrutiny Committee meetings have been asked to complete a short feedback questionnaire.

Officers attending all stated that they felt discussion was well focused and that members seemed well briefed and on the whole asked pertinent and relevant questions. All those responding felt that Scrutiny makes a positive contribution to the decision making process and enables issues to be highlighted in a timely fashion. It is pleasing to note that all those responding agreed with the statement that Scrutiny Committee is generally a positive environment - facilitating constructive debate. Only one issue was identified as needing further consideration and that related to the attendance of officers at Scrutiny Committee. This issue, along with the other points raised under that later section of '**Areas for future consideration**' will be discussed with the Scrutiny Committee post May 2015.

National Scrutiny context

Scrutiny at South Somerset, whilst still facing the same constraints and risks as other local authorities, has managed to thrive in the right organisational culture and environment. Looking back over the past four years there have been numerous examples of where Scrutiny has been able to make real and lasting contributions to the work of the authority and the communities we serve.

Our well- developed pre-decision and service review based Scrutiny really has demonstrated the point that there is no substitute to the analysis of an issue or service which Scrutiny is well placed to do and where input from non-executive members can bring out choices and alternatives that otherwise might never have seen the light of day (INLOGOV 2013)

An era of increased focus on transparency and local accountability can only strengthen the case for effective scrutiny – knowing that decisions and actions will be subject to a robust scrutiny process can only lead to improved decision making and contribute in no small way to a 'no surprises' collaborative culture.

Going forward into the next four years, we are well placed to continue to maintain and develop a scrutiny function that is pivotal in promoting improvement, efficiency and collaboration by building on past successes and our experiences should. As the public sector landscape continues to evolve, Scrutiny will need to widen its scope to include all public sector agencies and look to hold those agencies to account for the services they deliver to our residents.

The role of Scrutiny is increasingly important as SSDC, like most other public sector bodies responds to the challenge of continued financial constraints balanced against rising public expectations.

Recent failures of effective internal challenge via Scrutiny that have occurred elsewhere are unlikely to be unique and we need to ensure that the positive working relationships that have developed between SSDC officers and members remain and continue to be developed and supported. This will ensure that our Scrutiny and governance arrangements are fit and ready to identify and tackle any problems if and when they should arise.

The main challenges / common characteristics associated with failing Scrutiny, as stated in the recent reports into failings in Rotherham and Mid Staffordshire are:

- Single party supremacy
- A dominating personality with influence (Elected or officer)
- Fear of been seen to criticise your own party colleagues
- Reduction on dedicated Scrutiny resources.

There is no evidence that any of these issues impact on our Scrutiny function.

Our Scrutiny successes are testament to the prediction made by the Audit Commission back when the Local Government Act 2000 was introduced, they said, *"...new political management arrangements will ensure a proper balance and a healthy tension between the Executive and Scrutiny. Without both being adequately resourced and respected, it is unlikely that you will get a high performing, dynamic council"*

The Jay report into the events in Rotherham stated that in the best councils, Leaders welcome the opportunity to give Scrutiny the responsibility for tackling some of the difficult issues, often involving several agencies, and starting from where people are at rather than where the Council is at.

We have worked hard to make sure that Scrutiny is not a place where political differences are played out. We acknowledge that we operate in a political environment but the Scrutiny Committee's commitment to an issue/evidence based approach has meant Scrutiny recommendations have been well received and respected. Delivering this effective cross party working is not easy but is essential to the continued success of Scrutiny at South Somerset.

For some time the Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) has warned of the danger of seeing Scrutiny as an optional add-on, an area in which to reduce resources. The recent problems in both Rotherham and Mid Staffs PCT, amongst others, have more than demonstrated that effective Scrutiny is an essential component of a healthy democracy.

A recent article in the Local Government Chronicle (04/02/15) identified the issues that should form the basis of an urgent national review of Scrutiny (something that is being called for by the Communities and Local Government Select Committee).

Firstly, it was cited that over 80% of all Scrutiny Chairs are appointed from the majority party. Based on the most up to date information held by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, SSDC is the only authority which automatically appoints an opposition chair of Scrutiny.

Officer and senior member resistance and obstruction as well as being 'regularly blocked in attempts to get information' were identified as major concerns for Scrutiny in over 60% of authorities. The value of the effective working relationships that we have invested in developing over the past few years pay dividends in largely avoiding such issues at SSDC.

The article concludes by stating that many local authority Scrutiny functions are characterised as 'being controlled and limited by both political and organisational culture'. Judging by the feedback and breadth of reviews undertaken, this is not a definition that could be applied to Scrutiny at SSDC.

In conclusion, Scrutiny at SSDC is effective and has many notable successes of which those members involved and the wider organisation should be proud. There are however, areas for further work in the future.

Effective multi-agency Scrutiny will become increasingly important and so working with the County Council to develop more robust Health Scrutiny arrangements should be a priority for the incoming Scrutiny Committee.

Perhaps the most pressing challenge will be to continue to demonstrate the need for an adequately resourced and well performing Scrutiny function in a climate of continually reducing resources. This report goes some considerable way in demonstrating the value the Scrutiny function and those members who work within it, bring to SSDC.

Concluding Comments from:

Chair of Scrutiny:

Scrutiny provides Councillors with the chance to work closely with Officers and staff on all levels at SSDC as well as working with outside bodies when in a Task and Finish group such as Council Tax Reduction Strategy or Flooding.

Although Scrutiny may only make recommendations, the need to ensure all our work is backed up by sound evidence adds considerably to Councillors' skills which used together with the professional support of Scrutiny Managers has helped produce the outcomes in this report.

I feel that the quote below from a senior Officer summarises how far Scrutiny has come and the important role we play:

My experience is that our members taking part in the scrutiny process often ask incisive questions in a constructive manner, their work adding value and transparency to the process.

Leader of Council:

South Somerset District Council has always had a reputation for effective cross party working one key matters affecting the district and the introduction of a highly effective Scrutiny function has added to that reputation. In the process it has brought serious added value to some very difficult issues and made a major contribution to evolving policy and good, effective decision making. A joint, countywide scrutiny led by South Somerset looked at the aftermath of the floods in 2012/13 and made recommendations that helped shape the way in which Councils responded to the 2013/14 major flood event. The Council Tax Benefit Reduction Scheme was a major piece of work involving a broad cross section of members looking at the individual impact on vulnerable residents in considerable depth and detail. The outcome was a scheme that proved to be fair and affordable. Not only does Scrutiny hold the Executive to account, it helps shape policy and ensures member engagement in service areas that affect the public. At South Somerset strong leadership and highly effective officer support for Scrutiny has created a force for good and I value its input into the democratic process.

Chief Executive

A key component of a successful Council is the effective interaction of Councillors through the formal structures that the Council operates. It is acknowledged that a well run and respected Scrutiny Committee not only adds value to the decision making process but also

enhances the reputation of the Council through constructive challenge. In my opinion SSDC actually takes this one step further: a number of knotty problems have been set for Scrutiny, whether in relation to flooding, the budget of the Council Tax reduction Scheme, and each time Scrutiny has produced a report that has provided the template for subsequent Council ratification. The Scrutiny Committee is a real asset to the Council and provides a model of cross party engagement for others to aspire to.

Agenda Item 11

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel

As the SSDC appointed representative on the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel (PCP), Councillor Tony Lock provides biannual reports to the Scrutiny Committee.

For members' information, a copy of papers submitted to the meeting of the PCP held on 11th March 2015 is included and Councillor Lock will be happy to answer any queries relating to these papers.

AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

11 March 2015

COMMISSIONER'S UPDATE

The following briefing provides an update for Panel Members on key activities since the last Panel meeting on 12 February.

Victims Commissioning

Lighthouse Victim Care:

New referral figures for January 2015 are as follows:

| Crimes | # Month | % Force | Incidents | # Month | % Force | C&I | # Month | % Force |
|--------|--------------------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----|---------|---------|
| | | 2421 | | 42.0% | | | 1967 | 81.8% |
| | Year To Date (YTD) | | | YTD | | | YTD | |
| | 9114 | 38.4% | | 7332 | 77.0% | | 16446 | 49.4% |

Commissioned Services:

Preparatory work continues before commissioned support services commence on 1 April 2015, following the announcement of successful providers in January. A partner's event was held on 13th February for new providers to introduce their services, and participate in discussions to contribute to development of the Outcomes Framework and victim care pathways, and discuss future development of services. The afternoon session featured a networking opportunity with market stalls including both newly commissioned services and other local service providers.

Successful providers are as follows:

- Lighthouse – provided by Avon and Somerset Police
- Emotional Support Service – provided by Victim Support
- Adults Advocacy Service – provided by The Care Forum, with collaborative partners of Support Empower Advocate and Promote (SEAP) and Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI)
- Young Persons' Advocacy Service – provided by North Somerset Youth Offending Team
- Independent Sexual Violence Advisors – provided by SafeLink
- Modern Slavery Support Service – provided by Unseen UK

Restorative Justice:

Work continues to deliver the Avon and Somerset Restorative Justice Implementation Plan, in response to recommendations of scoping work carried out in Summer 2014. There has been significant interest in the approach taken by Avon and Somerset. The approach was highlighted at the Ministry of Justice Restorative Justice Conference on 18 February, which included a workshop run by Avon and Somerset representatives that was well received.

Restorative Justice Coordinators are now in post, working alongside Lighthouse Victim Care teams to assess risk and suitability and refer victims on to appropriate restorative justice facilitators.

As reported to the last meeting, the Commissioner has committed Ministry of Justice funding for the Somerset Community Justice Partnership and Bristol Neighbourhood Justice Panel, with new service specifications agreed to support delivery of the Restorative Justice Implementation Plan. An Invitation to Bid has been issued for the development of a Neighbourhood Restorative Justice service covering Bath & North East Somerset and South Gloucestershire. The deadline for bids closed on 6 March 2015.

CSE Innovation Fund Bid

Members will recall that the Commissioners in Avon and Somerset and Wiltshire have worked with Constabulary and Local Authority partners to submit a bid to the Home Office Innovation Fund to provide consistent and robust arrangements to identify and support victims of child sexual exploitation. The outcome of the bid is expected in early March and preparations are ongoing in consultation with partners.

Partnership and Commissioning Update

Community Safety Partnerships will be considering funding decisions for 2015/16 allocation of the Commissioner's Community Safety Grant at Board meetings over the coming weeks. Members will be aware that local decision making represents a change from the process applied in previous years, whereby CSPs submitted their preferred bids to the Commissioner for decision. The OPCC continues to work closely with both CSP Managers and Partnerships as part of the local allocation process and to agree outcomes and performance oversight arrangements for successful projects.

Mental Health Concordat

Following the signing of the local Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat Declarations in December the OPCC is working closely with partner organisations to finalise and sign off the supporting action plans to achieve the ambitions of the Declarations. The action plans need to be submitted to the Department of Health before the end of March 2015.

Road Safety Update

On February 11, 2015 speed cameras across Avon and Somerset began to be turned back on. Starting with the static camera on the A4 at Saltford, a total of 29 cameras will become operational again for the first time since 2011.

The Constabulary bought six cameras for £1 each from Somerset County Council and 11 from South Gloucestershire Council. Two are owned by Bath & North East Somerset Council, one by North Somerset Council and nine remain the property of Bristol City Council.

Revenue from the cameras will be used in part to fund the camera's maintenance to ensure that their reactivation is cost-neutral for the Constabulary.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Avon and Somerset Constabulary has been praised by the Home Office for preparatory work and progress in embedding of the new tools and powers arising from the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act of last year. The Force has been asked by the Home Office to chair an event in London in April to assist those areas struggling to get the tools and powers off the ground. Work continues to take forward new tools and powers (in particular the Community Remedy and other aspects of partnership working), and positive progress has been made. The Community Trigger will be formally launched on 27 April, showcasing several successfully resolved cases and highlighting lessons learnt so far. Dispersals have been working particularly well with several successful cases, most notably the closing of a 'Legal High' shop in Taunton. A meeting will take place with partners on 12 March for partners to develop the delivery plan for the coming year. The Commissioner intends to host an ASB Scrutiny event in October, similar to the Domestic Abuse event held late last year.

Independent Custody Visiting Scheme

The Independent Custody Visiting Scheme has continued to provide independent oversight through the move to new police centres at Bridgwater, Keynsham and Patchway. A recruitment process has increased volunteers to 16 visitors for each of the three new centres, and 8 at Yeovil. Visits take place once every five days, lasting 75 minutes. The OPCC is currently working on moving to an electronic reporting system to replace the paper report forms currently used. This method will be more efficient and cost effective; saving time, postage and paper. Currently the West Midlands is the only area to use an electronic reporting method so their system was used as a template to create a bespoke system for Avon and Somerset ICVs. The report form is currently being finalised and it is hoped that the electronic version will be ready to roll out in April. Avon and Somerset is working with Devon and Cornwall, Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire to move towards a standardised Regional ICV scheme. A working group has been set up of ICVs from across the region, looking into how the scheme is currently being run in their area and to identify best practice moving forward. This is an exciting development as the group will be the first regional ICV scheme amongst ICVA (the national Independent Custody Visiting Association) members.

Commissioner's Community Action Fund

Awards have been made for funding from the Commissioners Community Action Fund for the final quarter of this financial year. Successful projects include a community transport scheme in Somerset for victims of domestic abuse to travel to court, a music outreach project for young people at risk of exclusion from school in Bath & North East Somerset, and a youth café in Bristol, run by young people with the aim to increase skills and reduce Anti-Social Behaviour. A full list of projects funded during 2014/15 can be found at the following link: <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Partnerships/Projects-supported-by-the-Fund.aspx>

Outcomes of Recent Events:

Out of Court Disposal Scrutiny Panel (11/2/15)

Representatives from MOPAC and the Met attended the meeting to observe the Avon and Somerset Panel in operation. A reciprocal visit is being arranged. The Panel Report, looking at the theme of Business Crime, together with the Constabulary response have been

published at the following link: <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Openness/Avon-and-Somerset-Out-of-Court-Disposal-Scrutiny-Panel.aspx>

National Updates

Pre-Election Period and Future Police Governance

Ahead of the local and national elections, the OPCC in liaison with APACE is planning for the pre-election period and considering how this might affect OPCC activity during this time. In addition, early consideration is being given to the steps required for the possible scenarios following the formation of a new government, namely:

- Planning for a 2016 PCC election
- Planning for a new model of police governance

CPS Consultation

The Commissioner has responded to consultation by the Crown Prosecution Service on guidance setting out the role of prosecutors in assisting witnesses to know what to expect before coming to court, feel prepared and able to give their best evidence. Improving the experience of victims at court is an issue that the Commissioner continues to pursue through her role on the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice Board, and commissioned services, as part of her priority to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice service.

Key Dates

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| March 12 th | BANES Out and About Day |
| March 19 th | South Gloucestershire Out and About Day |
| March 24 th | Bristol Out and About Day |
| April 1 st | Sedgemoor Out and About Day |
| April 14 th | North Somerset Out and About Day |
| May 27 th | West Somerset Out and About Day |
| June 2 nd | BANES Out and About Day |
| June 3 rd | West Somerset Public Forum |
| June 11 th | Bristol Out and About Day |
| June 16 th | South Gloucestershire Out and About Day |
| June 23 rd | North Somerset Out and About Day |
| July 1 st | Sedgemoor Out and About Day |

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL
11TH MARCH 2015**

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN REFRESH 2015-17

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 In March 2013, the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner issued her statutory Police and Crime Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. The plan set out the Commissioner's strategic priorities of:-

- Reducing the impact of anti-social behaviour;
- Tackling domestic and sexual abuse, particularly towards women and children;
- Preventing and reducing burglary and fear of burglary; and
- Putting victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

1.2 In 2014-15, the Commissioner launched nine supplementary non-statutory plans covering each of the district and unitary authority areas within Avon and Somerset. These aimed to communicate the Commissioner's priorities to local residents, provide details of key activity in each area and inform residents on how they can get involved in delivering the plan.

1.3 The statutory Avon and Somerset plan and local authority level plans are revised on an annual basis to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date and take account of the changing social, economic and organisational environment. The plans are informed, in particular, by issues highlighted via the multi-agency Police and Crime Needs Assessment¹ and public and partner consultation.

1.4 The updated plans cover the period 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2017 and include an additional strategic priority to improve road safety for all road users. Progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan is formally reported as part of the Commissioner's Annual Report in May each year.

2. PROCESS

2.1 The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 requires that the Police and Crime Plan, and any subsequent update of the plan sets out for the Commissioner's remaining period in office² the:-

- policing of the police area which the chief officer of police is to provide;

¹ <http://www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk/Your-PCC/Police-and-Crime-Needs-Assessment.aspx>

² Up to the point at which the following statutory Police and Crime Plan must be issued by (in this case 31st March 2017).

- financial and other resources which the Commissioner is to provide to the chief officer of police;
 - means by which the chief officer of police will report to the Commissioner on the chief officer's provision of policing;
 - means by which the chief officer of police's performance in providing policing will be measured; and
 - crime and disorder reduction grants which the Commissioner is to make and the conditions (if any) of those grants.
- 2.2 The plan has been developed in consultation with the Chief Constable, as required by the Act. This included dedicated review meetings to oversee development of the Plan and jointly develop the performance framework that will support it. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has also worked closely with Constabulary priority leads and key departments such as Strategic Service Improvement in developing the revised plan.
- 2.3 The plan has been informed by extensive public consultation, primarily via the Commissioner's Police and Crime Survey and local engagement activity and events. Key areas of consultation have included attitudes and preferences with regard to the policing precept and public priorities for policing in Avon and Somerset. The latter, in particular, has led to the inclusion of road safety as an additional priority as part of the 2015-17 Plan.
- 2.4 A wide range of partner organisations have been consulted on the draft Avon and Somerset and Local Authority level plans, including local authority, community safety and youth offending team partners, the Criminal Justice Board, Fire and Rescue services, Health and Wellbeing Boards, NHS and CCG Commissioners, Voluntary and Community sector umbrella organisations, children's Trusts and adult and children's safeguarding services.
- 2.5 The Police and Crime Panel, who are statutorily required to provide feedback on the Avon and Somerset plan, were also consulted during February and March 2015 before formally reviewing the draft plan on 11th March 2015.

3. KEY CHANGES AS PART OF THE 2015-17 PLAN REFRESH

- 3.1 The 2015-17 Police and Crime Plan introduces **Road Safety** as a police and crime priority for 2015-17 in response to a high degree of public concern and increases in risk of harm identified during 2014. The Police and Crime Survey identifies speeding and road safety amongst the issues residents would most like the police to prioritise – second only to increased police visibility and reassurance policing. The Police and Crime Needs Assessment also highlighted a 5% increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Avon and Somerset's roads since 2011, which compared to a 6% reduction nationally.
- 3.2 The revised plan introduces a **broader performance framework** that strengthens the focus on quality of service and wider aspects of the plan such as 'connecting the police

with local people', being 'open, transparent and accountable' and 'delivering greater value for money'. The performance framework has also been strengthened by the introduction of the annual HMIC PEEL assessment in 2014, which provides a more holistic and independent source of assurance on how well the Constabulary is tackling crime and ASB, protecting vulnerable people and delivering an efficient, fair and legitimate service. Despite these changes, the original suite of indicators set as part of the original plan in 2013 have been retained³ along with the ambition to become a top performing force across all priority areas by 2017.

- 3.3 Priority sections and objectives have been updated to reflect **new commissioning arrangements**, most notably with regard to victim services, restorative justice and the development of a framework to support victims and witnesses in coping and recovering from the impact of crime and ASB.
- 3.4 The plan includes the introduction of a **vision for the future of policing** in Avon and Somerset which will see better integrated and co-ordinated local services and greater collaboration – particularly with Wiltshire police in building upon the strategic alliance announced in 2015.
- 3.5 Details relating to **grants and commissioning** arrangements for 2015/16 and the **financial position** for the remaining period of the Comprehensive Spending Review have been updated to reflect the current profile. Progress in closing the organisation's funding deficit has also been included as part of the monitoring framework which supports the plan.
- 3.6 **Local Authority level Police and Crime Plans** have been fully updated in collaboration with the Constabulary, local authorities and community safety partners to reflect changes the changes set out above and progress in delivering the Police and Crime Plan.

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Police and Crime Plans set a framework for the delivery of police and crime services and funding allocations between 2015 and 2017. The statutory plan includes details of the PCC's commitment to equality and diversity, including the commitment to monitoring the Constabulary Equality and Diversity Objectives.
- 4.2 Accessibility for all sectors of our communities is critical to the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and consideration has been given to channels of communication which are tailored to different needs throughout the consultation and drafting process. The documents are available in 'easy read' format and can be made available on request in audio, Braille, large font formats or translated into other languages. Provision has been made to deal with such requests

³ Note: Police 'detection' indicators for burglary and serious sexual offences have been updated to reflect changes in the Home Office Crime Outcomes framework in 2014 and are now captured within the category of 'investigations fully resolved'.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The Panel is asked to note the revised Police and Crime Plan for 2015-17.
- 5.2 The Panel is asked to note the responses to consultation on the revised plan which will be made available to the Panel following the feedback deadline of 10th March 2015.
- 5.3 The Panel is invited to make final recommendations on the draft Police and Crime Plan and ratify the Plan subject to those recommendations.

Contact Officer:

Dan Howitt,
Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
dan.howitt@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

Agenda Item 12

Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews

The Task and Finish Review Chair or Scrutiny Manager will give a brief verbal update on progress made.

Current Task & Finish Reviews

- Council Tax Reduction Group
-

Scrutiny Work Programme

| Meeting Date | Agenda Item | Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee | Budget | Background/Description | Lead Officer/ Lead Member |
|--------------|--|-------------------------------|--------|--|---|
| 2 June '15 | Possible review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation | ✓ | | Following comments made at Council in January 2015. An item to discuss a possible Task and Finish review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation. | Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager |
| 3 Nov ' 15 | Anti-Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 | ✓ | | At the Scrutiny Committee meeting 4 Nov 2014 members received a presentation about the Act. The committee requested an update report after 12 months about the impact in/for South Somerset. | Steve Brewer, Community Safety & Projects Officer and Vicki Dawson, Principal Environmental Health Protection Officer |
| TBC | Health Scrutiny | ✓ | | Following the presentation from Ann Reader to Scrutiny, a report suggesting a new approach to Health Scrutiny will be presented to members. | Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager |

The Somerset Waste Board and Somerset Waste Partnership Forward Plan of key decisions can be viewed at:
<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/policies-and-plans/plans/cabinet-forward-plan/>

Agenda Item 14

Date of next meeting

Members are requested to note that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for Tuesday 2 June at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
