

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 30 June 2015.**

(10.00 - 10.55 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Tony Lock
Jason Baker	Tiffany Osborne
Dave Bulmer	Garry Shortland
John Clark	Rob Stickland
Gye Dibben	Martin Wales

Also Present:

Mike Beech

Officers

Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Helen Rutter	Assistant Director (Communities)
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer

12. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 June 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Val Keitch, Sue Osborne and David Recardo.

14. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised.

17. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed members that she had unfortunately been unable to attend the Joint Waste Scrutiny meeting on 19 June 2015.

She also noted that on behalf of Scrutiny members and officers she had presented an Albertine Rose to Tim Carroll., former Deputy Leader of Council.

18. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive since 4 June 2015 (Agenda Item 7)

The Scrutiny Manager provided members with two feedback comments from the District Executive meeting held on 4 June:

SSDC Annual Performance Report 2014/15 - In response to questions from the Scrutiny Committee, the Strategic Director (Place and Performance) confirmed that a Members Workshop on performance was planned shortly and the Performance Indicators would be reviewed at that time. She also advised that complaints relating to the Development Management service had reduced by 95% over the previous 4 years.

2014/15 Revenue Budget Outturn Report - In response to a question from the Scrutiny Committee, the Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) advised that due to the changes in Business Rates from 1st April whereby SSDC kept a share (the Business Rate Retention Scheme), the Government had provided compensation for the various grants they had provided to businesses affected by flooding. She also confirmed that the budget underspend would be used to support the 2015/16 budget.

The Scrutiny Manager also informed members that since the special District Executive meeting on 25 June, the superfast broadband project was now back to the open tender process as BT had not been awarded the contract as they could not commit to certain reassurances and targets.

19. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 July 2015 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 2 July 2015. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration.

Yeovil Western Corridor Improvement Scheme – item 6

- Members made no comments and were content that the recommendations go forward.

Annual review of SSDC Partnerships – item 7

- Members were content that the Heart of Wessex Leader Programme be added to the Partnerships Register.

Corporate Grants Report 2014 - 2015 – item 8

- Members noted that the report was very interesting but felt that they had sufficient oversight of the Area Grants through the Area Committees and that normal budget monitoring facilitated adequate overview of Corporate Grants – Scrutiny members suggest that in order to reduce potential duplication that this ‘to note’ report ceases to be included in future District Executive Agendas.

Community Right To Bid – Assets of Community Value – item 9

- Members made no comments.

Appointment of Honorary Alderman – Agreement of Criteria and Rights – item 10

- Members re-considered this report in detail. The principle of honouring long service was supported, but any additional financial incentives were not endorsed.
- Members were strongly of the opinion that Aldermen should not be financially recompensed.
- Members considered each of the ‘rights’ as detailed in section 6 of the report, and the ones that the Scrutiny Committee did not support were:
 - *Use of the Members’ Room in the District Council offices (including building access card)* – for security reasons this was not considered to be appropriate.
 - *Annual parking permit for all SSDC Car Parks* – due to the financial implications
 - *Invited to represent the Chairman or Vice Chairman of Council when they are unable to attend a civic event* – members were concerned if the Alderman would be duty bound by any Code of Conduct and implications from not being so.
 - *£100 gift voucher per year towards Octagon Theatre tickets* – due to the financial implications

Increase in Councillors on Yeovilton Parish Council – Community Governance Review (CGR) – item 11

- Members made no comments and were content that the recommendations go forward.

CONFIDENTIAL – Exclusion of the Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Committee resolved that the press and public be excluded from the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, i.e. “Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Land Adjacent to Steep Holme, Penn Hill Park, Yeovil (Confidential) – item 16

- Members considered the report in closed session and were content that the recommendations go forward.

20. Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider fees within the Licensing Service (Agenda Item 9)

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report as detailed in the agenda, and explained that if members were content to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider fees within the Licensing Service, then an email would be circulated inviting any non-executive member to be on the group.

Members were in agreement that the Task and Finish Group be established. Councillors Martin Wale, Tony Lock and Gye Dibben each expressed an interest to be on the group.

ACTION: Scrutiny Managers to set up and arrange meetings for a Task and Finish Group to consider fees within the Licensing Service.

21. Proposal to include a review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation in the Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 10)

The Scrutiny Manager presented the report as detailed in the agenda and explained the background to the item and the request for a review. She advised members that there were two approaches that could be taken:

- Request an initial report from officers to discuss further a review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation and for officers to scope such a review . i.e. officers undertake the review.

or

- Agree that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group undertake the review.

Following discussion, and consideration of comments submitted by an absent committee member, it was agreed that a further report from officers should be requested to consider in more detail the points raised by members, to include information about:

- Whether the scheme is currently fit for purpose
- Implications to the scheme of changes in legislation and planning guidance
- Implications, if any, following adoption of the Local Plan
- Further information about the two-starring system and whether it's being equally applied across the areas.
- Are internal processes working consistently across the four areas
- If any aspects of the scheme are felt to be not fit for purpose, what needs to change?

The Scrutiny Manager noted that any timescales would need to be agreed with officers, but at this stage she suggested asking for the initial report to be made to the November meeting of Scrutiny Committee

ACTION: Scrutiny Managers to request that the Development Control Manager provides a report to the November meeting of Scrutiny Committee regarding a possible review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation.

22. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman provided members with a brief update about the Council Tax Reduction Task and Finish Group. She noted a survey had been due to take place shortly, however this had been put on hold as Government had indicated that changes may be announced in the near future. For the benefit of new members to the committee she gave a brief overview of the work of the group.

ACTION: Members to note the update.

23. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 12)

The Scrutiny Manager provided members with the following updates:
Somerset Rivers Authority – a meeting was arranged for later in July to look at options for long-term funding, and it would be worthwhile for interested members to attend.

Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel – the Chairman was the main person who attends these meetings, which take place roughly twice a year, but there was a need also for a substitute member. It was agreed that Dave Bulmer should be the substitute member.

ACTION: That members note the updates.

24. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 13)

The Scrutiny Manager reminded members that following discussion of agenda item 10, a report on the Planning Scheme of Delegation would be added to the Work Programme for November. Following brief discussion of the Leader Programme whilst considering item 7 on the District Executive agenda, officers would be invited to make a presentation about the programme to the September meeting of Scrutiny Committee.

ACTION: The Democratic Services Officer to add the following items to the Scrutiny Work Programme:

- Report on the Planning Scheme of Delegation – November
- Presentation about the Leader Programme - September

25. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 4 August 2015 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

.....
Chairman