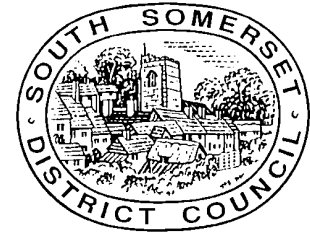


# South Somerset District Council

## *Notice of Meeting*



# Scrutiny Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

## Tuesday 30th June 2015

### 10.00 am

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

(disabled access is available at this meeting venue)



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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](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Monday 22 June 2015.

*Ian Clarke, Assistant Director (Legal & Corporate Services)*

This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://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 John Clark

Clare Aparicio Paul  
Jason Baker  
Gye Dibben  
Val Keitch

Tony Lock  
Sue Osborne  
Tiffany Osborne  
David Recardo

Garry Shortland  
Rob Stickland  
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](http://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 30 June 2015**

## Agenda

### *Preliminary Items*

**1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 June 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. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive since 4 June 2015 (Page 5)**

**8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 July 2015 (Page 6)**

**9. Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider fees within the Licensing Service (Pages 7 - 8)**

**10. Proposal to include a review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation in the**

**Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 9 - 10)

11. **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews** (Page 11)
12. **Update on matters of interest** (Page 12)
13. **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Page 13)
14. **Date of next meeting** (Page 14)

# 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 2 June 2015.**

(10.00 am - 12.30 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Dave Bulmer (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	Tiffany Osborne
John Clark	Garry Shortland
Sue Osborne	Rob Stickland
	Martin Wales

**Also Present:**

Ric Pallister	Jo Roundell Greene
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**Officers**

Anuska Gilbert	Performance Officer
Andrew Gillespie	Performance Manager
Martin Woods	Assistant Director (Economy)
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

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**1. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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**2. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jason Baker, Gye Dibben, Val Keitch and Sue Steele.

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**3. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)**

There were no declarations of interest.

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**4. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)**

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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## **5. Issues arising from previous meetings (Agenda Item 5)**

There were no issues raised.

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## **6. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

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## **7. Presentation - Introduction to Scrutiny (Agenda Item 7)**

The Scrutiny Managers outlined the key aspects of South Somerset District Council's Scrutiny function, including statutory roles and responsibilities as well as the importance of Scrutiny maintaining an independent, objective and non-partisan approach.

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## **8. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 June 2015 (Agenda Item 8)**

Members considered the reports outlined in the District Executive agenda for 4 June 2015. It was agreed that the following comments would be taken forward to District Executive for consideration.

### **SSDC Annual Performance Report (Agenda item 6)**

- Members formally recommended that Scrutiny are actively involved in any future review of Performance Indicators, as mentioned by the Performance Manager at the meeting.
- Members queried if recent changes to working practices, in particular the introduction of hot-desking arrangements had had any impact on the sickness absence levels?
- Clarity was also sought over PI's 006 and 007 relating to Inward investment – Scrutiny recommend that the reporting against these indicators is clarified to show the number of jobs actually created.

### **Capital Outturn report (Agenda item 7)**

- On page 18, members questioned why only two post completion reports had been completed?
- Members also asked for an explanation as to why the Capital Spending Pattern on page 16 consistently shows an underspend, although it was noted that the gap is narrowing.
- Members noted that there is no reference to the Infrastructure Reserve, and although they noted that very little of this reserve has been spent, it would still be useful to see it reported.

### **Revenue Budget Outturn Report (Agenda item 8)**

- Members sought clarification on the figures relating to NNDR contained in paragraph 22 on page 44 – does this figure mean that we had an additional £132k NNDR debt than that of the grant? What is being done to mitigate this in the future?



### **Superfast Broadband (Agenda item 9)**

- This complex issue has been the subject of a detailed Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, and as we have reported in the past, this is a very frustrating issue, caused mainly by the lack of information from the CDS project team. When this matter was considered by DX in June, members of the Scrutiny Committee fully endorsed the recommendations that although an agreement in principle to provide the funding could be made, no actual monies should be released until assurances had been provided that:
  - a) Businesses premises would be a priority; and
  - b) That the money would be spent in South Somerset.
- Members of Scrutiny Committee note that despite the best endeavours of officers, these assurances have not been provided and this now poses a difficult decision going forward. Members noted that the Devon District Councils are having their contribution covered by Devon County Council and so essentially; this leaves SSDC as the only District yet to commit the funding.
- Members noted that the provision of reliable Broadband is very much a local priority and the risk of taking a decision that results in not providing this service to our residents is very real.
- In conclusion, members felt that in the absence of the information that would be presented verbally to DX members, they were unable to support a decision either way at this stage.
- Members also suggested that approach to this matter could be referred to the National Audit Office as the whole process involves significant amounts of public money and this authority is being asked to proceed in the absence of the usual safeguards that we have come to expect.

### **ICT Software and hardware upgrades (Agenda item 10)**

- No Comments

### **Designation of a Neighbourhood Area – Castle Cary and Ansford Parishes (Agenda item 11)**

- No comments

### **Appointment of Honorary Aldermen (Agenda item 12)**

- The committee supported the criteria and rights proposed.

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## **9. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 9)**

There were no updates from the Scrutiny Managers.

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## **10. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny Managers explained to members the importance of setting a balanced and well managed Scrutiny Work Programme and emphasised that the decision as to what to include in the Work Programme rested with the members of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Scrutiny Managers went on to explain the various processes that are in place to support this including the Scoring Criteria and the Report Request Template.

In response to a suggestion put forward by Cllr Clark concerning call response times with the Contact Centre, the Committee completed a report request template and asked that a report be included on the August Scrutiny Committee Agenda.

Members also agreed that at the July Scrutiny Committee meeting, they would consider whether to include the issue of the Planning Scheme of Delegation as suggested by Full Council in March, in their future Work Programme.

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**11. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 11)**

Members noted that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 30 June at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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.....  
Chairman

# Agenda Item 7

## **Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive since 4 June 2015**

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meetings held on 4 June 2015 and 25 June 2015.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 4 June 2015 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

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# Agenda Item 8

## **Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 July 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 July 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 30 June 2015.

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

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# Agenda Item 9

## **Proposal to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider fees within the Licensing Service**

*Lead Officers: Emily McGuinness & Jo Gale, Scrutiny Managers*  
*Contact Details emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566*  
*joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077*

### **Action Required**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree to establish a Task and Finish Group looking at the current levels of Licensing fees applied by South Somerset District Council and to investigate the viability of adopting a total cost recovery approach where legislatively permissible.

### **Background**

Licensing fees are currently the subject of much debate and litigation. It is therefore vital that the Council has a robust method for the determination of licensing fees. The primary aim of this Task and Finish Group, if established, will be to work with officers and the Portfolio Holder where necessary, to recommend a fee structure which is robust and based on a sound evidential base. As part of this process, members of the Task and Finish Group will consider the principle of adopting a full cost recovery approach when setting Licensing fees.

The request to establish this Task and Finish Group has come forward from the Service Manager as he would welcome member involvement at an early stage in this process. Any recommendations from this Task and Finish Group will need to be considered by the Licensing Committee before final adoption by Full Council as part of the budget setting process for 2016/17. Therefore, the Task and Finish Group needs to have finalised its recommendations by early December 2015.

If established, the members of this Task and Finish Group will be supported by both the Licensing Manager and the Scrutiny Manager.

Further clarity on the proposed aims and objectives of this review can be found in the attached 'One Page Strategy'.

## **THE ONE PAGE STRATEGY ASKS US TO STATE:**

- **What is the broad topic area**

Licensing fees and charges.

- **The specific topic**

To look into the principle of establishing a total cost recovery principle in respect of the Licensing Service and propose amendments to the current fee structure to reflect this principle.

- **What are our ambitions for the review/outcomes**

- To fully understand the proposals of the Licensing Service operating on a Total Cost recovery principle, to include the legislative framework and ethical implications.
- If the principle of full cost recovery is accepted, then this Task and Finish Group will aim to make evidenced based recommendations to the relevant decision making bodies, outlining a schedule of fees for the Licensing Service that allows for full cost recovery. Members must ensure that the authority has robust evidence to show the exact service costs and the correlation between service costs and the fees charged.
- To better understand the national picture in relation to setting fees for Licensing Services, such as government guidance and legislation, and to address any issues that may improve the experience of local authorities through bodies such as the LGA.

- **How we perform at the moment**

To look at our current fees and charges and consider how these compare to actual service costs.

- **Who (and how we) should consult**

Other local authorities in Somerset have recently done a significant amount of work on this topic and their data will be a valuable part of this review - not reinventing the wheel!

Members will also need to be clear about the legislative constraints.

- **Who we need to help us (experts/partners)**

Licensing Service  
Finance support  
Legal Services advice

- **How long it will take**

Any recommendations will need to be ready to be included in budget setting for 2016/17 so will need to be agreed via Licensing and District Executive by the end of December 2015.

# Agenda Item 10

## **Proposal to include a review of the Planning Scheme of Delegation in the Scrutiny Work Programme**

*Lead Officers: Emily McGuinness & Jo Gale, Scrutiny Managers*  
*Contact Details emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462566*  
*joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077*

### **Action required**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to agree that a report reviewing the Planning Scheme of Delegation is included in their 2015/16 Scrutiny Work Programme with an anticipated date of October 2015.

### **Background**

As Members may recall in February this year, Full Council resolved that Scrutiny be asked to consider including a review of the current Planning Scheme of Delegation in their 2015/16 work programme. This decision was made in response to a proposal from Councillor Andrew Turpin.

The purpose of this brief report is to seek agreement from members of the Scrutiny Committee that the matter of reviewing the Planning Scheme of Delegation be included in the Scrutiny work programme for future consideration by the Committee.

In February when the issue was initially discussed, the Assistant Director – Economy indicated that officers within his team would commence a review of the Scheme of Delegation by firstly gathering evidence on the current working of the Scheme, thus establishing an assessment on the current effectiveness of the Scheme, before making any recommendations to Full Council if any changes were deemed necessary.

The Assistant Director – Economy also stated that there are a number of factors that contribute to making the review of the Scheme of Delegation a reasonable action to take, including the introduction of the Local Plan which may have made some of the references within the Scheme obsolete.

Officers have indicated that a report will be presented to Scrutiny in October 2015.

The Portfolio Holder – Strategic Planning (Place making) is aware of this planned review and will be involved by the review team as the work progresses.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee may wish to use this opportunity to identify any issues they feel officers may want to include in the review.

Councillor Andrew Turpin has requested that the issue of Parish Representation is included in the review - Councillor Turpin will be notified when this matter is due to be considered by Scrutiny so that he may attend.

To support member's consideration of this item, the standard Scrutiny Report Request template is attached.

## **Request for report to come to Scrutiny Committee**

**Subject:**

**Purpose of report**

**Why do you want a report on this issue/topic?**

**Why have you requested this report now?**

**What do you hope to achieve having considered the report (consider outcomes)?**

**Specifics**

**Please detail any specific questions you would like the report to answer?**

**Please detail any specific information you would like in the report?**

**Please detail if there is anything else that you would find helpful, forecasts or examples etc.**



# Agenda Item 11

## **Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews**

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

### **Current Task & Finish Reviews**

- Council Tax Reduction

# Agenda Item 12

## **Update on matters of interest**

*Lead Officers:*            *Emily McGuinness, Scrutiny Manager*

*Contact Details:*        *emily.mcguinness@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462566*

## **Action Required**

That members of the Scrutiny Committee note the verbal updates as presented by the Scrutiny Manager.

## **Purpose of Report**

This report is submitted for information to update members of the committee on any recent information regarding matters of interest to the Scrutiny Committee, and for the Scrutiny Manager to verbally update members on any ongoing matters including:

- Somerset Rivers Authority
  - Joint Waste Scrutiny Panel – appointing a Scrutiny member
-

## Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
4 August '15	Report on Call Answering times	✓		A report on this topic was requested by members at their meeting on 2 <sup>nd</sup> June 2015.	Jason Toogood, Customer Focus Support Manager, and Roger Brown, ICT Manager
1 Sept '15	Finance Awareness /Training	✓		As requested by members, a session led by the Finance Team to explain the fundamental elements of local government finance, and Scrutiny's role, prior to the Budget Setting process for 2016/17.	
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

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 will be held on Tuesday 4 August at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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