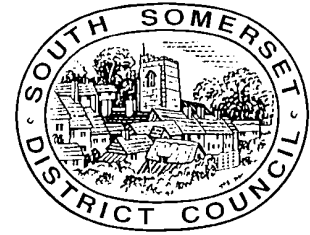


South Somerset District Council

Notice of Meeting



Scrutiny Committee

Making a difference where it counts

Tuesday 2nd February 2016

10.00 am

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

(disabled access and a hearing loop are 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 Monday 25 January 2016.

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 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.

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

Recording and photography at council meetings

Recording of council meetings is permitted, however anyone wishing to do so should let the Chairperson of the meeting know prior to the start of the meeting. The recording should be overt and clearly visible to anyone at the meeting, but non-disruptive. If someone is recording the meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting.

Any member of the public has the right not to be recorded. If anyone making public representation does not wish to be recorded they must let the Chairperson know.

The full 'Policy on Audio/Visual Recording and Photography at Council Meetings' can be viewed online at:

<http://modgov.southsomerset.gov.uk/documents/s3327/Policy%20on%20the%20recording%20of%20council%20meetings.pdf>

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Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 2 February 2016

Agenda

Preliminary Items

1. Minutes (Pages 7 - 13)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 January 2016.

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. Shared Accommodation Project at Brympton Way Offices (Pages 14 - 17)

8. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 7 January 2016
(Page 18)

9. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 February 2016 (Page 19)

10. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Page 20)

11. **Update on matters of interest** (Page 21)
12. **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 22 - 24)
13. **Date of next meeting** (Page 25)

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 5 January 2016.**

(10.00 am - 12.20 pm)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	Sue Osborne
John Clark	David Recardo
Gye Dibben	Garry Shortland
Val Keitch	Rob Stickland
Tony Lock	Martin Wales

Also Present:

Peter Gubbins	Angie Singleton
Ric Pallister	

Officers

Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Laurence Willis	Assistant Director (Environment)
Garry Green	Engineering & Property Services Manager
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

93. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

94. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clare Aparicio Paul, Dave Bulmer and Tiffany Osborne.

95. Declarations of interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

96. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised.

98. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman informed the Committee that item 8 – Call-in of Portfolio Holder decision would be taken ahead of item 7 – Verbal update on Journey of Exploration as representatives from Yarlinton Homes were in attendance for item 8.

99. Journey of Exploration - Update (Agenda Item 7)

The Leader of the Council gave a verbal update to the Committee covering some of the following points:

- The Joint Leaders Advisory Group (JLAG) meeting of the 7th January had been rescheduled for the 14th January to allow emerging issues to be reflected in the draft headline business cases;
 - The Headline Business cases were still on track to be presented to Council in February;
 - The continually evolving Devolution Agenda will have an important impact on the final decision, a report on this will be presented at Full Council.
-

100. Portfolio Holder Decision Called in by Scrutiny Committee: - Consent for Disposal of a Property in Rimpton by Yarlinton Housing Group (Agenda Item 8)

The Scrutiny Manager outlined the process for considering a Call-in. She informed the Committee that a Call-in had been received in accordance with the Council's Constitution and that it was now the role of the Scrutiny Committee to agree if the Call-in request should be upheld and the options available to the Committee. Committee Members were reminded that a Call-in could only be made on the following three grounds:

- The decision is outside for the Council's budgetary framework (i.e. no funds have been allocated in the budget to this matter);
- The decision is outside of the Council's policy framework (i.e. we don't have a policy covering this matter or the decision is counter to an agreed policy/procedure); or
- The decision making process is flawed (i.e. insufficient consultation, lack of evidence etc.)

Members were reminded that they could:

- Decide there were no grounds to support the Call-in and that the decision should stand; or
- Give specific reasons as to why the decision should be called in and refer it back to the Portfolio Holder to allow them to reconsider the decision in light of Scrutiny's comments; or
- Refer the decision to Full Council, again with specific reasons as to why the decision should be reconsidered.

Members were also reminded that SSDC's Constitution makes provision for 'call-in' after the decision is implemented – this provides an opportunity for Scrutiny to consider the implications of any decision. The scrutiny Committee can then make recommendations to the Executive or Full Council on changes to policy or practice in the light of their findings – this approach avoids the need to 'suspend' decisions whilst the matter is considered and is most appropriate where members may feel that an adopted policy is no longer appropriate – rather than where they feel that a decision does not comply with a particular policy.

Councillor Sue Osborne, as one of the two signatories of the Call-in was given the opportunity to present her grounds for the Call-in to the Committee. The following points were raised:

- The Portfolio Holder Decision referred to the disposal of property in Rimpton and that the decision had been taken under provision made in October 2012.
- Under these provisions 3 disposal decisions had been taken in 2013, 2 in 2014 and 10 in 2015 (the majority of which were in rural settlements) – these figures show that the number of such requests for disposal are increasing significantly.
- The majority of such disposals would seem to occur in the rural areas of the district, although it is understood that funds from the disposal will be spent locally, this is restricted by the sites that come forward. What is done to ensure funds are invested in the rural area?
- The 'donut' principle used so effectively in the SSDC Rural Lettings Policy does not seem to be applied in the case of disposals. Could properties be amended to help meet demand?
- Each request for a disposal is essentially a matter of balance and judgement.
- This call-in had been instigated to allow an open and transparent discussion of the issues associated with the adopted policy and processes.

Councillor Ric Pallister, as the responsible Portfolio Holder, and the Corporate Housing Strategy Manager (SSDC) were then given an opportunity to respond. The following points were raised:

- SSDC are only a consultee on each decision to dispose of a property. Yarlington Homes are required to seek the views of the relevant Local Housing Authority but the ultimate decision will be taken by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).
- The recent decision of SSDC not to support the request to dispose of a property in Curry Rivel is the first time Local Authority support has been withheld and it will be interesting to see what impact this may have on the decision of the HCA.
- The number of requests to dispose of properties is more than likely to increase as Yarlington Homes responds to further financial pressure from government
- With regard to the money from a disposal of a property being spent locally, SSDC has no powers to ensure it is spent in SSDC, The decision called-in was made in accordance with the existing policy. In particular, there are no direct budgetary implications and the relevant Ward member was consulted
- It was reiterated that a decision to dispose did not set a precedent – each request is considered on its merit, even within the same settlement.
- Yarlington may wish to dispose of properties in rural locations where they only own a couple for management purposes.

Mr Richie Horton, Managing Director – Property (Yarlington Homes) added the following points:

- There was some speculation that within 6 months, due the acceleration in government requirements that it will not even be necessary to secure HCA approval.
- All of our properties have to achieve a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of 69, those properties with a low SAP rating are problematic.
- The disposal programme will accelerate, we have to ensure that the properties we have, meet local demand and help meet the bottom line, Yarlington Homes is a business.

In considering the information presented to them, members of the Scrutiny Committee made the following comments:

- The Call-in had provided a useful opportunity to discuss various issues around this topic,
- Whilst this decision had been taken in accordance with adopted policy, there would seem to be some merit in revisiting the policy as agreed in October 2012 and ensuring that all members are clear about the process involved.
- The Call-in was in no way intended as a criticism of the officers or Portfolio Holder involved, more an attempt to clarify the policies and processes involved.

Following a unanimous vote, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to recommend:

That the Portfolio Holder decision as proposed stands and that further work is carried out to clarify the SSDC process for consideration of such disposal requests in the future. Such a review will be conducted once the outcome of the HCA decision regarding the request to dispose of a property in Curry Rivel is known.

101. Update on SSDC Telephony (Agenda Item 9)

The Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services presented the report. During discussion, the following points were made:

- Monday 4th January had seen an unprecedented level of demand in the contact centre with in excess of 2000 calls received – this had resulted in some customers waiting 8 minutes or abandoning their calls.
- However, this was very much the exception and the new software had now been successfully installed.
- The majority of previously identified issues had now been successfully resolved.
- Work is currently being undertaken to allow key messages to be played to callers – such as waste collection information and when the best times are to call, using historic call data to identify off peak times.
- The possibility of introducing a function to tell callers where they are in the queue is also being investigated.
- The Quarterly performance report scheduled for March would include a full set of call handling data.
- Members clarified that if a customer terminated their call ahead of speaking to an advisor it would be reported as an abandoned call even if the information they had been provided while on hold answered their query.

- Members asked if a note could be prepared and circulated to Parish Clerks outlining the best times to contact the Council and the most appropriate channels (e.g. email, direct dial or Contact Centre)

Members congratulated both the teams involved for their work in addressing the issues previously raised and improving the service.

The Assistant Director – Finance and Corporate Services agreed to update the Committee on any issues should they arise in the future.

102. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 3 December 2015 (Agenda Item 10)

Members noted the update given by the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

103. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 7 January 2016 (Agenda Item 11)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the reports contained in the District Executive Agenda for the 7th January and made the following comments:

Setting the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)

Scrutiny members have considered this matter in great depth through a Task and Finish Group and Scrutiny Committee – they would like to thank officers for all their hard work on this topic and fully support the recommendations in the report.

Approval of the Somerset District Authorities Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy

Members supported the recommendations in the report but noted that the report contains no financial implications – even if there are no resource implications, the report should make this clear so that members have the full picture before taking any decisions.

Proposed leasing of 80 South Street

Members support the recommendations in the report and noted that consideration had been given to SSDC carrying out the building works ourselves, but that it was not appropriate in this case and that the recommendations contained in the report effectively turned the property from a liability into an asset.

Medium Term Financial Plan

Members noted that the Capital Programme element of the report was not included as details were not currently available for all bids – members would be presented with the complete picture in due course.

Members noted that the report outlined the likely impact of the Government settlement and that early indications are that the necessary savings needed by 2020 are achievable.

Regarding the temporary SRA precept, members asked what would happen if one or more Somerset authority did not support its introduction?

Members discussed the potential £200k additional income from Automatic Number Plate recognition for car parking and look forward to further reports prior to implementation.

Members queried the two separate amounts shown as savings against Vacant Posts, Donna Parham Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) explained that the £143,500 represented the sum that had been achieved to date primarily from people reducing their hours and the £108,000 is a target for further saving.

The Committee queried the savings allocated to the cessation of the CEO contract – a saving of £88k is allocated for this. Members asked what would happen if a decision is taken to appoint a CEO in the future?

Members noted the detailed work that officers had done to investigate the possibility of introducing up to 2 free hours parking. The Committee noted that the findings would seem to indicate that the costs would seem to be prohibitive but did ask that further work be done to cost various options for free parking for periods of less than one hour – members accepted that such work would probably be dependent on the outcome of discussions re: automated number plate recognition.

Members asked when the report of the Strategic Director Place and performance outlining the Transformation Programme would be coming forward to members?

Community Right to Bid

Members noted that All Saints Church in Yeovil Marsh had been nominated and asked for clarification as to whether functioning/ active churches could be nominated?

Confidential Item – Urgent Executive Decision

Members noted the report and asked if in future it would be possible to include how much interest the capital sum would have earned if not allocated to such a project? This would provide a useful comparator for members.

104. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 12)

The Scrutiny Managers updated the Committee on the work of the Task and Finish Group established to review the on-going Journey of Exploration. The next meeting scheduled for the 8th January had been cancelled due to the fact the Joint Leaders Advisory Group meeting on the 7th January has been rescheduled for 14th January. The Task and Finish Group would meet again on 15th January at 2.30 p.m.

105. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 13)

There were no updates on matters of interest.

106. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 14)

Members noted the Scrutiny Work Programme.

107. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 15)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Tuesday 2 February 2016 in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way.

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Chairman

Agenda Item 7

Shared Accommodation Project at Brympton Way Offices

Executive Portfolio Holder: Henry Hobhouse, Property & Climate Change
Strategic Director: Vega Sturgess, Operations & Customer Focus
Assistant Director: Laurence Willis, Assistant Director (Environment)
Lead Officer: Laurence Willis, Assistant Director (Environment)

Purpose of the Report

To update members of Scrutiny Committee with the outcomes of the shared accommodation project, and any further work being undertaken or planned as a result of the changes

Forward Plan

This report appeared on the Scrutiny Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of February 2016.

Public Interest

In addition to facilitating revenue savings for both organisations through more intensive use of a single facility, there is an added dimension of public interest in the shared accommodation project because key public services have been brought under one roof and are now delivered from the same location in Yeovil

Recommendations

It is recommended that Scrutiny note the findings of this update report, and the works ongoing as a result of the shared accommodation project.

Elements of project, and ongoing work as a consequence of office moves

Lease and Preparation Works

- The Lease comprised several related documents and all had to be agreed before SSDC could start works (and incur significant expenditure). These negotiations started late December 2013 and concluded in August 2014.
- As time was tight, in parallel with the negotiations the Property and Engineering team prepared plans for the works to Brympton Way, applied for planning approval for the car park extension, and sought tenders for the car park extension, removals and ancillary works (electricals, car park lighting, fire risk assessment, security system etc. This meant we were ready to press the green light as soon as documents were signed.
- Completion of the 'Agreement to lease' document meant that both parties were committed to the project, and could not back out. Once this was signed, we were able to carry out our office moves, and free up the red floor, as well as award tenders for the works SSDC agreed to do internally, and start the car park extension externally. Deadlines were set in the agreement for SSDC in order that there would be enough time for SCC to vacate Maltravers House in time to meet the break clause in their lease.

- Once we were ready to hand over the red floor, the lease could be signed, and this was done in early October 2014. The council also received the first rental payment and service charge in advance to cover the period up to Christmas. There were some further deadlines for SSDC to meet in accordance with the lease by December 2014, including the new door with swipe from the canteen to access the new car park at the rear of the building which is used by SCC staff.
- As time was tight, we also agreed to carry out some work on behalf of SCC, which included the installation of 3 phase electricity to the red floor. This was done during the weekend following the vacation of the red floor, with their contractors starting on site the week after, so close coordination was essential.

Office Moves

- There were several drafts of the new office layouts during December 2013 and January 2014 during an extensive staff consultation exercise. We also carried out an occupation survey, and the combination of the two allowed us to create a 'best fit' for team size, office use, and spaces available.
- We used our own version of the 'hot desk' model with the fundamental principle that no one 'owns' their own desk any more. This allows greater utilisation of space because it is agreed that desks can be shared, and foreseeable factors such as staff holidays/sickness/training etc mean that fewer desks are required and space can be saved. Studies show that offering 7 desks for 10 staff is more than adequate, and we have actually achieved 8.3 desks for 10 staff.
- A further guiding principle was that we wanted to fit the teams into the spaces available, rather than spend money creating new spaces. This ensured the amount of building work we needed to carry out was kept to a minimum.
- We also wanted to 'add value' with some efficiencies where possible, so for example Customers First are all now based on the ground floor, the Licensing service (who have the highest number of visitors) are also on the ground floor, Building Control are sited alongside Development Control, and GIS now work alongside ICT.
- The modest building works and office moves were carried out during August and September 2014 and completed on time. Spare office furniture was moved to a vacant unit at the small business centre for sorting, and this was all cleared by April 2015 when the unit was leased to a business that had suffered a fire and needed to move quickly.

Car Park Extension

- As described above, by the time the Agreement to Lease was signed, we were ready to start the car parking works. SCC asked for 120 spaces, and creating them included a new car park at the rear of BW, new visitor spaces behind the flagpole and at the entrance to the service yard, and the creation of additional spaces utilising shrub beds, and trialling some 'tandem' spaces as an efficient use of space and to meet planning requirements. The net loss to current arrangements for SSDC is 14 spaces, which surveys indicated could be easily accommodated.
- The new car park at the rear and the changes at the front, was all completed by mid-December 2014.
- Members expressed concern about the potential for parking off site on the Lynx estate. Much emphasis at meetings with SCC staff was placed on preventing this, but with SCC charging for staff parking permits, some staff have chosen to park off site. However, this is limited due to the new double yellow lines that were painted (coincidentally) towards the end of 2014.
- The whole of the car park has been made subject to a car parking order, which means that enforcement action can be taken if necessary. Car passes have been issued to SSDC officers and Members and these must be displayed at all times.

- A new lighting scheme was implemented at the same time as the work to create the new spaces. This replaced columns and lighting units that were starting to fail. The new bulbs are LED, which are particularly energy efficient.

Liaison with County staff moving across

- An SSDC project team coordinated the whole process on behalf of this council, but in addition a joint project team was formed to represent both councils, and they considered the many issues that inevitably arise when sharing a building from start to finish of the project. SCC had only recently started to share with Sedgemoor DC, so knew the likely priorities, and the team ensured problems were dealt with prior to the moves whenever possible.
- Agreement was reached on a comprehensive shared office protocol dealing with matters such as security passes, post, opening hours and so on.
- SSDC continued to operate the reception service and now act as contact point for SCC visitors. A protocol for the extent of this work, how a recharge is calculated and a process for dealing with complaints has been jointly agreed. Recently they have agreed to part fund the security guard, which is a welcome development.
- A 'welcome' programme was originally planned, but the moves have been happening gradually as different SCC facilities are moved, and the last staff to be based at Brympton Way are not scheduled to move until April. In the meantime, a joint facilities management group meets regularly and has become the main focus for joint working problems and successes. An example of the latter was the installation of the solar panels on the council chamber and extension roofs, which was accessed from county parking spaces. An agreement was reached to allow certain members of the SCC staff to park in the new visitor spaces by the service yard, and the installation went without a hitch. Other opportunities are also being taken to integrate SCC staff in to the life of the BW offices, which includes participating in the blood doning sessions, use of the canteen etc, and recently they used the council chamber for a series of all staff meetings, which worked out very well. Subject to availability, it is anticipated they will be invited to participate in our health and wellbeing programme.

Review

- Immediately after the moves, staff were invited to let us know of any problems for them, and many staff suggestions and requests were actioned immediately, for example requests for additional furniture, shelves and so on. These were all completed and signed off.
- A more formal review was carried out in March 2015 to consider the actual experience of working in the new arrangements, and this together with our observations and experience highlighted a number of issues that could be further considered. One of these was the need for a space that could be used by staff who are part of smaller team, or single staff, or staff that only access the office occasionally or for short periods, and are therefore not aligned to one particular team. When the Benefits enforcement team transferred to DWP in 2015, the opportunity was taken to address this by moving HR into the space they had occupied. This had the positive effect of giving HR a dedicated room and greater confidentiality. Their former space on the other side of the legal team was then utilised to form a 'hot desk' area, which is now fully utilised by the staff mentioned above. A further issue to be addressed this year will be the additional staff expected following the success of the Leisure team in attracting grant funding. Other more significant change put on hold at least until the business cases for shared or solo working are considered, are consideration of the more effective use of meeting rooms, and the space used by Directors and Assistant Directors. Other issues would require funding and additional space to be found to provide (for example) additional showers and lockers to enable more people to cycle or walk to work.

- Although as part of the project all the car parking spaces requested by SCC were delivered, they are experiencing pressure for their spaces on particular days and times and they have asked us for any assistance we might be able to offer. As part of this work, we are carrying out a review of the use of SSDC spaces, which we will be able to compare with the survey work we did before sharing, to see whether we are also experiencing increased pressure on 'our' side of the barrier and whether this suggests what the reasons might be. This work should be completed over the next few weeks.

Financial Analysis

The table below shows the budgets allocated to the project for both capital and revenue, and the associated spend against each.

Capital	£
SSDC Original Capital Allocation	254,000
Contribution from SCC	<u>12,000</u>
Net Budget	242,000
Spend on extension of car park & associated works	208,000
Underspend returned to balances	34,000

Revenue	£
Original Revenue Budget	100,000
Spend on:	
Employee & premises expenses	1,322
Supplies & Services	46,300
Payments to Contractors	<u>57,066</u>
Total Spend	104,688
Overspend covered by public offices budget	4,688

The ongoing revenue budget is summarized in the table below.

2015/16 Revenue Budget	£
Rental & Service Charge Income	189,200
Less Security Costs	<u>22,000</u>
	167,200

Additional income is being raised from an annual contribution of £11,470 for Reception Services and negotiations are currently ongoing with SCC for a contribution of £7,500 towards the security guard. Further savings are also expected from electricity and business rates costs.

Agenda Item 8

Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 7 January 2016

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 7 January 2016.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 7 January 2016 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

Agenda Item 9

Reports to be considered by District Executive on 4 February 2016

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 4 February 2016.

Members are asked to read the reports and bring any concerns/issues from the reports to be discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 2 February 2016.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 4 February 2016.

Please note:

The Press and Public will be excluded from the meeting when a report or appendix on the District Executive agenda has been classed as confidential, Scrutiny Committee will consider this in Closed Session by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A under paragraph 3 (or for any other reason as stated in the District Executive agenda):

“Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).”

It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from the Access to Information Rules outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Agenda Item 10

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

- Journey of Exploration

Agenda Item 11

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.

Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
1 st Mar '16	Equalities action plan 2012-16	✓		Scrutiny were involved in the original creation of the plan and has a role in monitoring performance and considering equalities across all of the Councils decisions.	Jo Morgan/ Martin Woods

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/>

Current Task & Finish Reviews

Date Commenced	Title	Members
November '15	Journey of Exploration	Sue Steele (Chairman), Clare Aparicio Paul, Cathy Bakewell, Mike Beech, John Clark, Sarah Dyke-Bracher, Val Keitch, David Norris, Sue Osborne, David Recardo, Dean Ruddle, Angie Singleton, Rob Stickland.
January 2016	Consent for disposal of housing stock	TBC – Following a call-in considered by the Scrutiny Committee at their January meeting, it was agreed that Scrutiny would review the policies and processes associated with the disposal of housing stock. This review will be carried out by a Task and Finish Group as soon as the outcome of a pending HCA decision is known.
April 2016 (TBC)	Discretionary Housing Payment Policy (DHP)	TBC – to be commenced only upon completion of the Journey of Exploration Task and Finish.
June 2016	Review of Street Trading Policy	Requested by Service Manager to look at reviewing current Street Trading Policy with a view to producing a report for November 2016 Council.

Proposal for an item to be included in Scrutiny Work Programme

Action required:

That members of the Scrutiny Committee consider whether to include the proposed item in their work programme for 2016/17.

Background

At the December 2015 SSDC Full Council meeting Councillor Nick Colbert tabled a Motion asking that the current Homefinder Somerset scoring system be amended for South Somerset applications to give higher priority to family, school and work commitments within a local area, thus maintaining family support networks and supporting sustainable local communities.

The Motion was extensively debated by the members present at Full Council with the Housing and Welfare Manager informing members of the wide ranging implications of adopting such a measure and seeking to assure members that the current allocations policy does recognise the importance of local connections. On several occasions during the debate, it was suggested that the Motion be amended to allow for the matter to be referred to Scrutiny for a more detailed discussion of the complex issues involved. This suggestion reflects the considerable work that Scrutiny did with Homefinder Somerset initially and the knowledge and expertise that members have developed.

Councillor Colbert did not amend his Motion and so the original Motion as tabled was voted on by Members and defeated. In the closing moments of the debate, members were informed that if they wished the matter to be considered by Scrutiny, a request should be submitted to the Committee in line with the established processes.

Subsequently, such a request has been received from Councillors Jason Baker and Val Keitch, asking that Scrutiny considers establishing a Task and Finish Group to work with the relevant officers, interested Scrutiny members and the Portfolio Holder(s) to investigate this matter in more detail before making a report back to Scrutiny.

If such a review is commissioned by the Scrutiny Committee, members may wish to consider the following points in agreeing the scope of this piece of work:

- Clarify existing allocations/scoring policies and the 'weighting' given to local connections – how well are current scoring arrangements communicated?
- Is it possible to introduce local variations to the Somerset Wide scheme?
- Are there any legal/financial/ reputational/equality implications to adopting local variations.
- Review the percentage of Market Town allocations given to those demonstrating a local connection within the last 12 months.

Recommended way forward

If members of the Scrutiny Committee agree that this issue warrants further investigation, the most appropriate way forward would be to establish a Task and Finish Group with the

very specific remit of looking at the implications of amending current HomeFinder Somerset allocations policy to give a higher priority to 'local connections'.

Based on initial discussions with the relevant service manager, this work should ideally be completed by April 2016. with a report back to Scrutiny in March 2016.

Agenda Item 13

Date of next meeting

Members are requested to note that the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will be held on Tuesday 1 March 2016 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.
