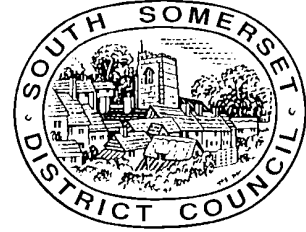


**South Somerset District Council**

*Notice of Meeting*



# Scrutiny Committee

*Making a difference where it counts*

**Tuesday 31st January 2017**

**10.00 am**

**Council Chamber B, Council Offices  
Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT**

(disabled access and a hearing loop are available at this meeting venue)



The following members are requested to attend this meeting.

**Chairman:** Sue Steele  
**Vice-chairmen:** Dave Bulmer and John Clark

Jason Baker  
Mike Beech  
Amanda Broom  
Val Keitch

Tony Lock  
David Norris  
Sue Osborne  
Garry Shortland

Rob Stickland  
Linda Vijeh  
Martin Wale

If you would like any further information on the items to be discussed, please contact the Democratic Services Officer on 01935 462596 or [democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@southsomerset.gov.uk)

This Agenda was issued on Monday 23 January 2017.

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

**This information is also available on our website  
[www.southsomerset.gov.uk](http://www.southsomerset.gov.uk) and via the [mod.govapp](http://mod.govapp)**



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

# 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).

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

## 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. 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>

# Scrutiny Committee

## Tuesday 31 January 2017

### Agenda

#### *Preliminary Items*

**1. Minutes** (Pages 4 - 10)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 3 January 2017.

**2. Apologies for absence**

**3. Declarations of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's current Code of Conduct (as amended 26 February 2015), 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.

**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. Somerset Waste Partnership Response to Call-In From Councillors Mike Beech and David Norris** (Page 11)

**8. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 January 2017** (Page 12)

**9. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1 February 2017** (Page 13)

**10. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews** (Page 14)

**11. Update on matters of interest** (Page 15)

**12. Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 16 - 17)

**13. Date of next meeting** (Page 18)

# 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 January 2017.**

(10.00 am - 1.05 pm)

**Present:**

**Members:** Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Mike Beech	David Norris
Amanda Broom	Sue Osborne
Dave Bulmer	Rob Stickland
John Clark	Martin Wale
Tony Lock	

**Also Present:**

Ric Pallister	Angie Singleton
Jo Roundell Greene	

**Officers**

Jayne Beevor	Principal Accountant
Catherine Hood	Finance Manager
Donna Parham	Assistant Director (Finance & Corporate Services)
Alex Parmley	Chief Executive
Martin Woods	Director (Service Delivery)
Colin McDonald	Corporate Strategic Housing Manager
Paul Wheatley	Principal Policy Planner
Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Emily McGuinness	Scrutiny Manager

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jason Baker, Val Keitch and Garry Shortland.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no questions raised by members of public at the meeting.

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

There were no issues raised from previous meetings.

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

The Chair informed members that the Transformation Board scheduled for the 10<sup>th</sup> January has been cancelled and there will now not be a meeting until February. It was her understanding that the programme is currently running two months behind with regard to the procuring of software and additional monies may be required to achieve the required timescales to realise the savings. Members of the Committee were encouraged to bring any issues or comments to either the Chair or the Vice Chair in advance of the Transformation Board meetings.

Members were also informed that a Call-in request had been received from Cllrs Mike Beech and David Norris pertaining to a recent decision on Recycle More by the Somerset Waste Board. In line with the agreed procedure, the Somerset Waste Board have been informed, but given that the timing of the submission of the Call-in just before the offices closed for the Christmas Break, officers had not yet had chance to discuss the implications with officers from the Waste Partnership. If the matter progresses to the Committee Stage, it is anticipated that it will be considered at the SSDC Scrutiny Committee Scheduled for 31<sup>st</sup> January.

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**95. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 1 December 2016 (Agenda Item 7)**

Members noted the District Executive minutes and the feedback provided by scrutiny members who attended.

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**96. Budget / Finance Skills for Scrutiny Members (Agenda Item 8)**

The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) supported by members of the Finance team gave a presentation to members, covering the following points: (a copy of the presentation can be provided on request)

- Legal Requirements of setting a balanced budget by the 11<sup>th</sup> March
- The Financial Management Process and the relationship between the Council Plan and Key Strategies and financial planning. Members were reminded of the key Scrutiny role of ensuring that the Council plan is adequately resourced on an annual basis.
- The SSDC approach to setting the budget including the annual setting of priorities, identifying underspends and unavoidable budget pressures.
- Signs that an authority may be reaching the 'Tipping Point' including decision paralysis and an inability to fulfil statutory functions.
- How to Scrutinise a budget by checking it aligns with an up to date Council Plan and other key strategies, what are the risks? Are the judgements sound? Have

the appropriate Equality Impact Assessments been conducted? Has the necessary consultation been carried out?

- The difference between Audit and Scrutiny roles in financial planning and monitoring.

During discussions, the following points were raised:

- As the authority moves forward, there will continue to be a reduction in the level of funding available and members will need to make informed decisions about what services and projects are priorities and what cannot be done. All members need to be a part of this discussion and there will need to be an updated Annual Action Plan to inform these discussions.
- The key is to ensure the Financial strategy provides the ability to move quickly and adapt, for example needing to reduce the Dependency on New Homes Bonus.
- It's important not to take 'knee jerk decisions' in relation to financial decisions, and continuing with our robust financial management arrangements will mean we should be able to take a considered approach, considering all of the evidence and assessing the risks.
- The benefits of internal borrowing were explained to members in that using our own capital to purchase items such as fleet vehicles was a better long term options as the capital sum would be repaid by the service and the council would be the owner of the asset.
- Business Rate growth is very risky.
- Members need to always assess the impact when considering financial decisions, this requires ensuring appropriate consultation.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the officers for a very informative presentation and discussion.

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## **97. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 5 January 2017 (Agenda Item 9)**

Members considered the reports contained in the District Executive Agenda for 5 January 2017 and made the following comments:

### **Report from Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (Agenda item 6)**

- Members noted this report.

### **Direct Hostel Provision, Move on Accommodation and Support (Agenda item 7)**

- Scrutiny members were grateful to the Corporate Strategic Housing Manager for attending the meeting at short notice to answer members questions.
- Members sought assurance that multi-agency solutions to addressing homelessness are being sought where appropriate and that effective monitoring arrangements are being put in place to ensure that long term solutions are being provided to our most vulnerable residents?
- Members noted that £160k would be added to the MTFP for the next 2 financial years whilst the impact of recent legislative changes are assessed.
- Scrutiny Committee were keen that the scheme is effectively measured in terms of outcomes achieved particularly in the longer term and suggested collecting

data with regards to the issues that have been experienced accessing mental Health Services.

### **Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 (Agenda item 8)**

- Members supported the recommendations and specifically made reference to supporting the current 15% minimum payment being retained whilst the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit is assessed.

### **Strategic Commercial Land and Property Project (Agenda item 9)**

- Members supported the principles of becoming more commercially minded to support SSDC's ambition to generate further income streams to support our corporate priorities. The committee noted that it will be important to ensure governance arrangements do not unnecessarily hinder a more commercial approach but would like to reiterate the importance of accountability and transparency when dealing with public funds.
- Members welcomed the potential for SSDC to develop the in-house capacity so that in the future we will be better placed to put suitable regeneration schemes together ourselves and sought assurance that the money being spent at this stage would lead to knowledge being retained within the organisation over the longer term.
- Members sought clarification as to what the decision making process will be for the final strategy and assumed that it will need to be a Full Council decision?
- The importance of looking at other authorities **comparable** to SSDC was stressed as part of the Strategy development process.

### **Policy for Awarding Private Sector Housing Grants/Loans and other Financial Assistance (Agenda item 10)**

- Scrutiny supported this approach to maximising available funding streams to provide DFGs. They asked for clarification that any monies paid into funds such as the Joint Community Equipment Service would be solely for the benefit of SSDC residents and wouldn't be spent elsewhere in the county?
- In light of the issues currently facing local authority financing and the importance of needing to retain an element of flexibility, members questioned the prudence of allocating specific levels of funding within the policy and suggested that robust monitoring would be needed to ensure that resources were allocated to where they are most needed.

### **Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital programme Update 2017/18 (Agenda item 11)**

- Members thanked members of the Finance Team for the informative training session held prior to the consideration of this item.
- The Committee noted that a fundamental role of scrutinising the budget is to assess whether resources are being allocated to support the delivery of the Council's priorities. Currently, we do not have an updated Council Plan which in turn means that Capital bids cannot be assessed, thus leading to an MTFP that is not as complete as it has been in previous years. We were pleased to note that the Leader stated that the updated Action Plan would be available for comment before budget papers are considered at Full Council in February.

- The committee noted that the Car Parking ANPR project will not now go ahead leading to a loss in anticipated income.
- Members questioned the profiling of the savings attributed to the Transformation Programme and sought reassurance that the programme is on track to deliver the anticipated level of savings.
- The Chief Executive Officer explained that delivering a successful Transformation Programme would be an inevitable draw on organisational capacity. Transformation will need to be a priority and this will mean there are some things that we can no longer do and that members would be consulted as soon as possible about indicative priorities.
- The Committee were reminded of the need to conduct appropriate consultation on proposed changes as well carrying out Equality Impact Assessments.
- The Committee questioned the Unavoidable Budget pressure of removing the Intern Levy and whether this meant we were ceasing the Intern programme. Members were pleased to note as part of transformation the intention is to increase the number of Interns.
- Members questioned if there was a chance that the capital costs for Transformation could increase as we have not yet procured the software and hardware.
- The Assistant Director (Finance and Corporate Services) confirmed that only £1.3 million of the £2million originally allocated had been used and therefore the £.7million could be utilised for any increase in projected costs and that reserves were also in place.
- Cllr Ric Pallister – Transformation Sponsor assured scrutiny members that changes to forward plans and budgets that result/materialise after the budget that they will come forward to Scrutiny and District Executive.

### **South Somerset Economic Development Monitoring Report (Agenda item 12)**

Members thanked the Principal Spatial Planner and his team for all their hard work in bringing forward this report and wished Paul well for his future role.

- Members noted that going forward it would seem more appropriate to slightly shift the focus of reporting to the additional employment floor space provided as opposed to land used as this would be a more realistic measure. Simply looking at the land target a little too simplistic and would we be better taking a more holistic approach to measures we can introduce to stimulate the economy?
- Scrutiny Committee noted the obvious link between this work and the emerging Economic Development Strategy and asked that Scrutiny, as has been the case previously, would be involved in the development of the policy.
- Members supported the suggestion that SSDC start on the Local Plan refresh process sooner rather than later – now would seem a perfect time to start planning in workshops as we have 11 years of data to make more informed policy decisions and to ensure resources are more accurately directed going forward.
- Scrutiny Members supported the approach of consulting with businesses to build up an accurate local picture and SSDC maintaining an active role in the multi-agency discussions about the future of the A303 and the A358.

### **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 items 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).

**Disposal of the Former Stables at Churchfield, Wincanton (Confidential) (Agenda item 16)**

Members supported the recommendations contained in the report.

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**98. Final Report from the Monitoring SSDC Council Tax Support Scheme Task and Finish Group (Agenda Item 10)**

This matter was discussed as part of the Committee's consideration of the District Executive agenda as stated above.

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**99. Appointment of Members to Somerset Rivers Authority Scrutiny Panel (Agenda Item 11)**

The Committee appointed Councillors Mike Beech and Val Keitch to the Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Waste Panel.

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

The following Task and Finish Groups are currently in progress:

**Consent for Disposal of properties** – A report would be coming forward re-focusing this work on the SSDC Rural Lettings policy and how the impact of Yarlington's continued disposal of rural properties can be mitigated.

**Discretionary Housing Payments** – Final report of this group will to Scrutiny in March

**Street Trading** – The draft Street Trading Policy is now out for consultation – the consultation period will end on 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

**Council Tax Support** – Members supported the Task and finish group recommendations, this group has now finished.

**National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief** –. The task and Finish group are still waiting on the data specific to charitable organisations, to inform their recommendation to Peter Seib- Portfolio Holder for Finance

**Right to Buy Clawback** –The task and Finish group met just before Christmas and a draft letter is being considered by the group to sendin response to the request from Garry Orr.

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**101. Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 13)**

There were no updates on matters of interest.

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**102. Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 14)**

Members noted the content of the Scrutiny Work Programme. Members were reminded that as from the 20 January there would only be 2 days a week dedicated Scrutiny Manager time and that the priorities of the Committee will need to be adjusted accordingly.

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**103. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 15)**

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017, in Council Chamber B, Brympton Way.

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Chairman

# Agenda Item 7

## **Somerset Waste Partnership Response to Call-In From Councillors Mike Beech and David Norris**

*Lead Officers:* Joanna Gale, Scrutiny Manager  
Steve Read, Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership

*Contact Details:* joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462077  
Steve Read – 01823 625707

On 23 December 2016 a Call-In was received from SSDC Councillors Mike Beech and David Norris regarding the decision taken on 16 December 2016 by the Somerset Waste Board – Item 9 – New Waste Treatment Facility Task and Finish Group Update.

In line with the SSDC Constitution, this item has been referred to to the SSDC Scrutiny Committee for discussion.

Steve Read (Managing Director, Somerset Waste Partnership) will attend the meeting to answer questions.

# Agenda Item 8

## **Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 January 2017**

The Chairman will update members on the issues raised by Scrutiny members at the District Executive meeting held on 5 January 2017.

The draft minutes from the District Executive meeting held on 5 January 2017 have been circulated with the District Executive agenda.

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# Agenda Item 9

## **Reports to be considered by District Executive on 1 February 2017**

*Lead Officer:* Joanna Gale, Scrutiny Manager  
*Contact Details:* joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462077

Scrutiny Committee members will receive a copy of the District Executive agenda containing the reports to be considered at the meeting on 1 February 2017.

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 January 2017.

The Chairman will take forward any views raised by Scrutiny members to the District Executive meeting on 1 February 2017.

### **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**

- Consent for Disposal of properties
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Street Trading
- National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief
- Right to Buy Clawback

# Agenda Item 11

## **Update on matters of interest**

*Lead Officers:* Joanna Gale, Scrutiny Manager

*Contact Details:* joanna.gale@southsomerset.gov.uk or (01935) 462077

## **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:

- Devolution Update – a brief update/presentation to be provided by Councillor John Clark

## Scrutiny Work Programme

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Issue for Main Scrutiny Cttee	Budget	Background/Description	Lead Officer/ Lead Member
28 Feb '17	Discretionary Housing Payments	✓		Final report of the Task and Finish Group.	Ian Potter
9 May '17 TBC	Rural Lettings Policy			Following the work of the Consent to Dispose and Local Connections Task and Finish Group it is recommended that Scrutiny review the SSDC rural lettings policy. Colin McDonald will attend the meeting to discuss.	Colin McDonald
TBC	Troubled Families Programme	✓		Members requested an update report on the progress of the troubled families following a report covering the work of South Somerset Together, Local Strategic Partnership. A specific report request needs to be compiled.	Helen Rutter
TBC	Review of Economic Development Strategy	✓		This Strategy is due for review and Scrutiny members have previously been involved in the review and development of this Policy. The Lead Officer has agreed that Scrutiny involvement will be factored in to the review process and we will be kept informed regarding the most appropriate point for effective Scrutiny engagement.	David Julian / Cllr Jo Roundell Greene.
TBC	Review of Performance Indicators	✓		Officers previously indicated to the Scrutiny Committee that work was planned to review the current suite of performance indicators. This work is dependent on the revision of the Council Plan and assurance has been given that provision will be made for effective Scrutiny engagement in this process.	Andrew Gillespie Charlotte Jones Cllr Ric Pallister
TBC	Increased Joint Working Between Police Forces			At the meeting of Scrutiny Committee on 30 August 2016, the SSDC representative on the Police and Crime Panel requested that there be a report looking at the proposals for increased joint working between police forces across the South West.	Emily McGuinness

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
13 May 2016	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. Cllrs Jason Baker, Neil Bloomfield, Val Keitch, Rob Stickland and Martin Wale.
September 2016	NNDR discretionary relief policy review –	The changes from the revised policy have taken affect from 1 <sup>st</sup> of April, this has resulted in some more feedback from ratepayers, the Task and Finish group will review this and changes in legislation regarding mandatory relief to ensure the policy still achieves what it set out to do and that the impact of the changes to mandatory relief are taken into account.
8 August 2016	How the Community Council for Somerset and South Somerset District Council could work better together to achieve more and better outcomes for the community.	Scrutiny Committee members invited Community Council for Somerset to work with them to identify areas where closer working could be of benefit to each organisation. Cllrs Clare Aparicio paul, Mike Beech, John Clarke, Tim Inglefield, Val Keitch, Mike Lewis and Alan Smith will be following this up by looking at sample projects to learn how to navigate obstacles such as data sharing agreements.
September 2016	Review of elements and proposals to establish a combined authority should members agree at Full Council to make an 'in principle' decision to create a Combined Authority.	Cllrs John Clark and Sue Osborne.
November 2016	Looking to establish if the Right to Buy clawback monies (from the sale of Yarlington Homes properties to residents who were secure tenants of SSDC before the housing stock was sold) should be ring-fenced specifically for the purpose of helping to fund the creation of additional homes across South Somerset.	Cllrs Clare Aparicio Paul, Mike Beech, Amanda Broom, Michael Lewis, Sue Osborne, David Recardo, Derek Yeomans, Colin Winder.

# 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 28 February 2017 at 10.00am in the Main Committee Room, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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