

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee** held at the **Main Committee Room, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 31 October 2017.**

(10.05 am - 11.30 am)

Present:

Members: Councillor Sue Steele (Chairman)

Jason Baker	David Norris
Dave Bulmer	Alan Smith
John Clark	Rob Stickland
John Field	Gerard Tucker
Carol Goodall	Colin Winder

Also Present:

Jo Roundell Greene	Val Keitch
Henry Hobhouse	

Officers

Jo Gale	Scrutiny Manager
Becky Sanders	Democratic Services Officer
Catherine Hood	Finance Manager

68. Minutes (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

69. Apologies for absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Lock and Martin Wale.

70. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

71. Public question time (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

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

The Chairman reminded members to feedback comments to the Scrutiny Manager as soon as possible regarding the report request for the Yeovil Innovation Centre, as had been discussed at the previous meeting.

Members were also requested to forward any specific questions regarding the Westlands Entertainment and Conference Centre to the Scrutiny Manager so that they could be addressed in the next report by the Arts and Entertainment Manager.

73. Chairman's Announcements (Agenda Item 6)

The Chairman noted she had attended the recent member briefing about Transformation. She had raised some questions about locality working and also requested that a person independent of SSDC chair the locality group meetings. In response, the Scrutiny Manager confirmed that an independent person had now been brought in to facilitate the group meetings.

74. Verbal update on reports considered by District Executive on 5 October 2017 (Agenda Item 7)

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

75. Reports to be considered by District Executive on 2 November 2017 (Agenda Item 8)

Members considered the reports within the District Executive agenda for 2 November 2017 and made the following comments:

Presentation by SPARK Somerset (Voluntary and Community Action) (Agenda item 6)

- Members sought re-assurance that SPARK were meeting targets and performing as expected, as they were financially supported by SSDC.

2017/18 Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the Period Ending 30th September 2017 (Agenda item 7)

- Members noted both budget reports seemed to be lacking context in places with addresses of some projects being omitted. E.g. Page 7, para 7 – the comment doesn't refer to the notes being related to the Westlands project, Page 30, para 10 table – Millers site doesn't detail that this is in Crewkerne etc.
- Page 9, para 18 – members queried how relevant was the drop in collection rates, and was the reason for the drop known? Scrutiny also asked if we benchmark our collection rates with other authorities?
- Page 12 – New Homes Bonus – it was noted that changes were likely in the future and queried if officers knew the likely effect should those changes happen, or if they might have a major or minor impact. Some members queried if it was possible to scope for any likely scenarios.
- Page 14 – bottom line of table. Scrutiny queried if the canteen facility is subsidised?

2017/18 Capital Budget Monitoring Report for the Quarter Ending 30th September 2017 (Agenda item 8)

- Page 30, para 9 - members queried whether the word 'income' should say expenditure instead, as otherwise the sentence did not seem to make sense?

- Appx B on page 43 – members commented it would be useful if the Leadership Board Proposals were SMART and had an indication of timeframes detailed.
- Middle of lower table on page 41 – Scrutiny sought clarification about when the funding allocation for ‘Investment in Market Housing’ had been agreed it would be useful if all future monitoring reports could have an additional column with the decision date and link to the report so you could refer back to the report and minutes

The Installation of a 14.8 kW Photovoltaic Array at Yeovil Innovation Centre (Agenda item 9)

- A member asked some technical questions about the project (issues around insurance, potential vandalism, and types of meters etc) , and Scrutiny were satisfied that the comments had been adequately addressed by the Portfolio Holder at the Scrutiny meeting.
- Members sought reassurance that there would be no business rates liability regarding the installation of the photovoltaic panels.
- Some members were concerned about the timeframes involved for the project, and if there were to be any slippage with the project installation if there would be a risk of failing to meet the deadlines to receive the specified feed-in tariff?
- Scrutiny queried the risk matrix, and noted the increased risks of proceeding with the project seemed unusual.

Increase in Councillors and Change of Name of Barwick Parish Council – Community Governance Review (CGR) (Agenda item 10)

- Members acknowledged the parish council wished to change its name and why. However members did note that the number of councillors requested seemed high for a parish of its size, and the reason for the increase in councillors seemed to not be based on population and representation.

District Executive Forward Plan (Agenda item 11)

- Scrutiny made no comments.

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).

Notification of an Urgent Executive Decision: Disposal of 11-12 South Western Terrace, Yeovil (Confidential) (Agenda item 14)

- Scrutiny made several comments in confidential session with regard to the processes relating to the disposal.

76. Verbal update on Task and Finish reviews (Agenda Item 9)

Council Tax Support Scheme 2018 – Revenues and Benefits Officers were finalising some data in response to monitoring recommendations made in the last Scrutiny Task

and Finish report. The reports regarding the 2018 scheme should be presented at the next Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Council Tax Support Scheme 2019 – The Task and Finish group had held their first meeting. They sought re-assurance with regard to the financial support/pressure to make savings and the potential risks or complications of making changes at a time when there will be significant change as a result of Transformation.

Homefinder Somerset - No updates since the last meeting

Car Parking Charges – The review would commence when resources permit. SSDC has lots of data to help inform the Task and Finish Group's strategy for conducting the review.

Transformation – Accessible Services – The Task and Finish Group would commence in January and will work with the Transformation Team to identify, and deliver, Best Practice to provide accessible on-line information and services for all.

77. **Update on matters of interest (Agenda Item 10)**

The Scrutiny Manager provided an update to members regarding Performance Monitoring. She noted the new Director for Strategy & Commissioning would like to speak to Scrutiny members in December to discuss some proposals for performance monitoring. During discussion members raised several comments including:

- Where was the evidence about what customers want?
- Need to get monitoring right. Need to know how we will compare post Transformation to now, like for like.
- Acknowledge data will be captured differently in the future but it needs to be comparable.
- Acknowledge much information is being captured but it's not being reported to members. Members need to also say what information they think is important to capture.
- Need to be able to monitor the 'channel shift'
- Background information also needed to give context to some data.

At the end of discussion, members expressed a preference for an informal workshop initially to discuss performance monitoring with the Director for Strategy & Commissioning, if possible to be arranged to take place before the next Scrutiny Committee meeting. Members also requested that the Scrutiny Manager circulate some background information prior to the workshop.

78. **Scrutiny Work Programme (Agenda Item 11)**

The Scrutiny Manager provided members with the following updates regarding future items on the Scrutiny Work Programme:

Innovation Centre - As mentioned previously on the agenda, this had not progressed due to waiting for sign off from some Scrutiny Committee members.

Customer Accessibility (website) - The Technology Implementation Manager had noted that his team were not intending to look at developing anything customer facing until March. The Scrutiny Manager advised that members would probably look to start a

review after Christmas. She asked members to view other websites and note examples of good practice and style of language used.

79. Date of next meeting (Agenda Item 12)

Members noted the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 10.00am on 5 December 2017, in the Main Committee Room.

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Chairman